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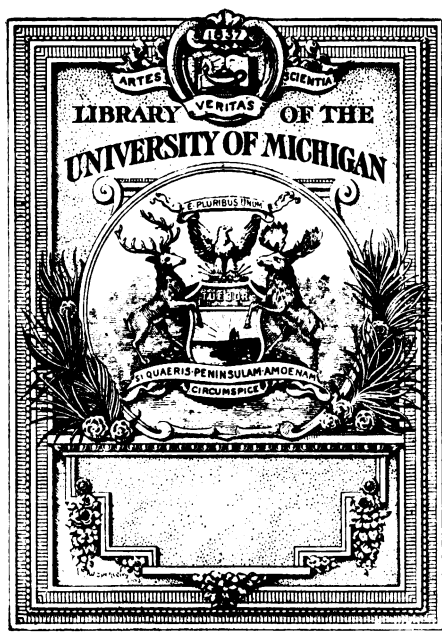
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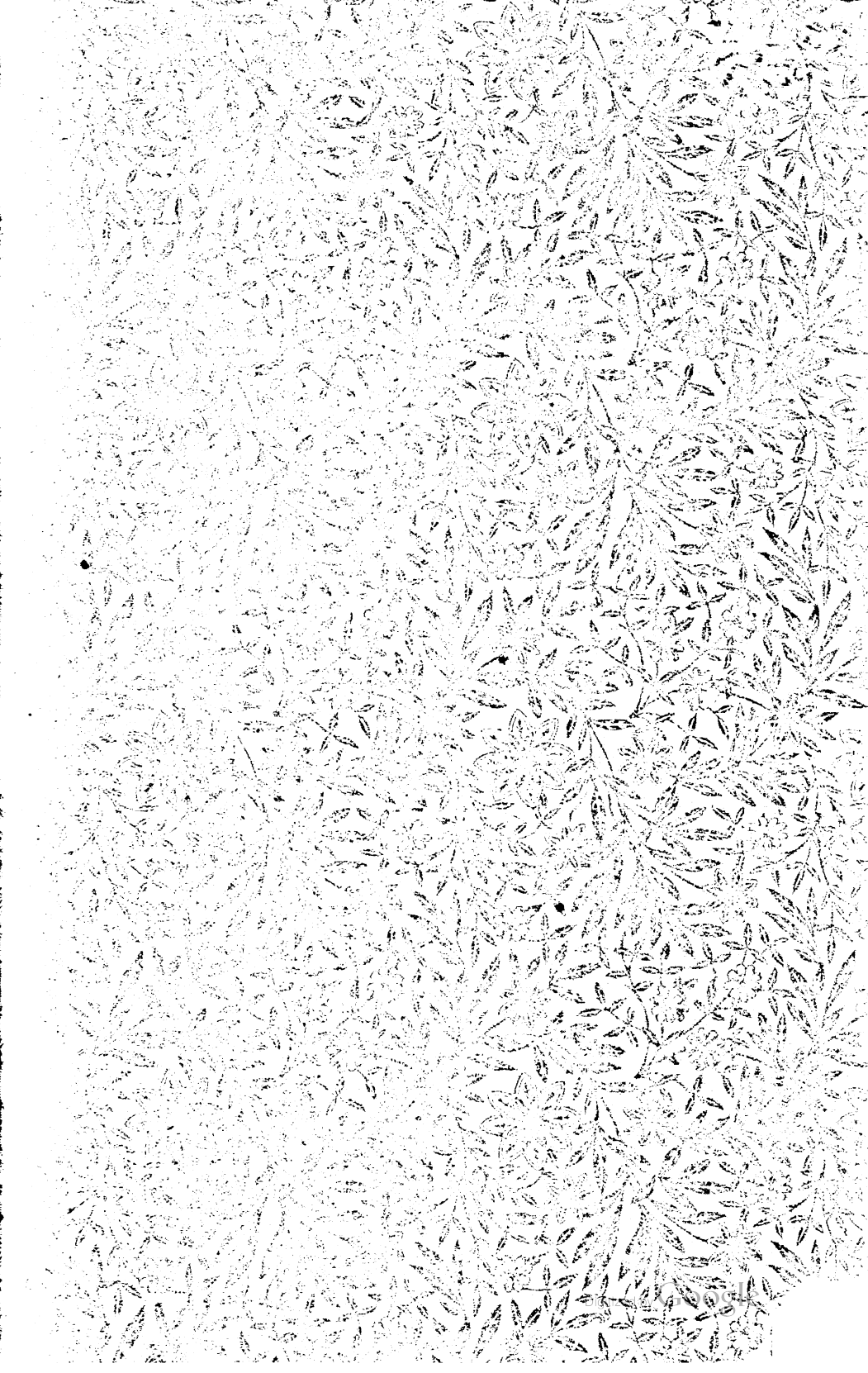
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Dec 29th 1881

SELECT NOTES
ON THE
INTERNATIONAL LESSONS
FOR
1882:

EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL;
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, CHRONOLOGICAL
CHARTS, SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS,
AND LIBRARY REFERENCES.

BY
REV. F. N. AND M. A. PELOUBET.
=

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY W. A. WILDE AND COMPANY,
No. 25 BROMFIELD STREET.

PREFACE.

THE lessons for this year being wholly from the Gospel according to Mark, and including the whole Gospel, we have endeavored to make as perfect a COMMENTARY ON MARK as possible, for the purposes proposed.

Helps of every class, and from every available source, — several large libraries being at our command, — have been made use of with the single aim of bringing the results of the best scholarship in this country and in Europe within the reach of, and in a form adapted to, the average teachers and adult scholars of our Sunday schools. There is no show of learning; but the clearest thoughts of the best thinkers have been culled from a wide range of authors.

The general features are much the same as in the former volumes, but with still more careful and earnest work.

May this volume be an aid in opening the Scriptures to many, calling attention to their wonderful treasures, and making the life of Christ a living power in the heart and life.

NATICK, MASS., August, 1881.

F. N. P.
M. A. P.

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EXPLANATION OF THE MAP OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.

1. The draught of fishes Matt. 4: 18-22. Mark 1: 16-20. Luke 5: 1-11.
2. Stilling the tempest Matt. 8: 23-27. Mark 4: 35-41. Luke 8: 22-25.
3. Healing of the demoniac of the Gadarenes. The swine running down a steep place. Matt. 8: 28-34. Mark 5: 1-20. Luke 8: 26-39.
4. Return to Capernaum Matt. 9: 1. Mark 2: 1.
5. Crossing over to the desert place Matt. 14: 13. Mark 6: 31. Luke 9: 10.
6. Feeding of the five thousand Luke 9: 11-17. John 6: 1-15.
7. The stormy — Christ walking on the sea Mark 6: 45-56. John 6: 16-21.
8. Feeding of the four thousand Matt. 14: 22-34. Mark 8: 1-9.
9. Return to Dalmanutha Matt. 15: 32-38. Mark 8: 1-9.
10. Voyage to Bethsaida via Capernaum Matt. 15: 39. Mark 8: 10.
11. Heals the blind man near Bethsaida Matt. 16: 5, 13. Mark 8: 13, 22, 23-26.



STATISTICS OF THE BIBLE.

	OLD TESTAMENT.	NEW TESTAMENT.	WHOLE BIBLE.
Number of Books	39	27	66
Number of Chapters	929	260	1,189
Number of Verses	23,214	7,959	31,173
Number of Words	592,439	181,253	773,692
Number of Letters	2,728,100	838,380	3,566,480
Middle Book	Proverbs.	2 Thessalonians.	Micah and Nahum.
Middle Chapter	Job 29.	Romans 13 and 14.	Psalms 117. 1
Middle Verse	2 Chronicles 20: 17.	Acts 17: 17.	Psalms 118: 8.
Least Book	Obadiah.	3 John.	3 John.
Least Verse	1 Chronicles 1: 1.	John 11: 35.	John 11: 35.

These facts were ascertained by a gentleman in 1718; also by an English gentleman, at Amsterdam, in 1772: and the investigation is said to have taken each gentleman three years.

The Bible has been translated into 226 different languages.

The Old Testament was divided into *chapters*, as they now stand, by Cardinal Hugo, in the middle of the thirteenth century. These chapters were divided into verses, as we now have them, by Rabbi Nathan, and adopted by Robert Stephens, a French printer, in his edition of the Vulgate, in 1555, and transferred to the Authorized Version in 1611.

The New Testament was divided into chapters by Hugo de St. Cher about 1240, and into verses by Robert Stephens, and was first so published by him in 1551, and thence these divisions were transferred to the English version, published in Geneva in 1560.

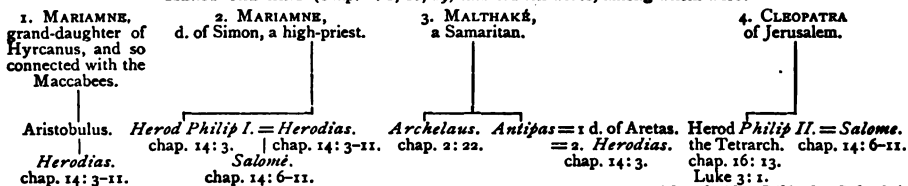
¹ Shortest chapter.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

Annunciation to Zacharias.....	6 B.C.	THE LIFE OF CHRIST. (From Andrews.)	Nov-Dec. 29 A.D.
Annunciation to Mary.....	October,	Jesus is told of the murder of the Galliæns by Pilate; parable of the fig-tree; healing of a woman 15 years sick..	
Birth of Jesus.....	April,	Fest of dedication; visit to Mary and Martha; the Jews at Jordan attempt to stone him; he goes beyond Jordan.	December, 29
Jesus born at Bethlehem.....	Apr.-June,	Jesus dines with a Pharisee, and heals a man with dropsy; parables of the great supper, of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of silver, of the unjust steward, of the rich man and Lazarus.	" 29 "
The angel and the shepherds.....	December,	Healing of the blind men at Bethsaida; the Jews to put him to death; he retires to Ephraim.	Jan-Feb., 30
Presentation of Jesus.....	February,	Sojourn in Ephraim till pasover at home; journeys on the borders of Samaria and Galilee; healing of ten lepers; parables of the unjust judge, and of Pharisee and publican; the fig-tree withered; blessing of children; the young ruler, and parable of the fig-tree.	
Coming of the Magi.....	May,	Jesus again announces his death; ambition of James and Judas.	Feb-Mar., 30
Return to Nazareth, and sojourn there.....	April,	Healing of blind men at Bethsaida; Zaccheus; parable of the pounder; departure to Bethany.....	March, 30
John the Baptist begins his labors.....	June,	Supper at Bethany, and anointing of Jesus by Mary.....	Saturday, 30
Baptism of Jesus in the wilderness.....	Jan.-Apr.,	Entry into Jerusalem; visit to the temple, and return to Bethany.....	Sunday, 30
Deposition of priests and Levites to the Baptist.....	April,	Return to Bethany; second purification of the temple; Teaching in the temple; parables of the two sons, of the wicked husbandman, of the king's son; attempts of his enemies to entangle him; the poor widow; the Greeks desire to hear him; a voice heard from heaven; the disciples part from him; the Jews desire to kill him.	Monday, 30
Jesus returns to Galilee.....	May,	Agreement of Judas with the priests to betray him.....	Tuesday, 30
Wedding at Cana of Galilee.....	Summer,	Jesus seeks retirement at Bethany.....	Wednesday, 30
First pasover of Jesus ministry; cleansing of Temple.....	Autumn,	Sending of Peter and John to prepare the pasover; the paschal supper.....	Thursday, 30
Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee.....	"	Events at paschal supper.....	Friday, 30
Jesus departs into Galilee.....	"	After supper Jesus foretells the denials of Peter; speaks of the coming of the Comforter, and ends with prayer.....	Saturday, 30
A few weeks spent by Jesus in retirement.....	"	Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.....	Sunday, 30
The Baptist imprisoned.....	"	Jesus is given into the hands of Judas.....	Monday, 30
Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee.....	"	Jesus is led to the house of Annas, and thence to the palace of Caiaphas; is condemned for blasphemy.....	Tuesday, 30
First circuit in Galilee; healing of the leper.....	"	Mockeries of his enemies; he is brought the second time before the council, and thence taken before Pilate.....	Wednesday, 30
Return to Capernaum, and healing of the paralytic.....	"	Charge of sedition; Pilate attempts to release him, but is forced to scourge him, and give him up to be crucified.....	Thursday, 30
Plucking the corn, and healing the man with withered hand.....	"	Jesus is crucified at Golgotha.....	Friday, 30
Healing of the blind man, and sermon on the Mount.....	"	Jesus is crucified at Golgotha.....	Saturday, 30
Healing of the blind man, and raising of the widow's son.....	"	Upon the cross is reviled by his enemies; commends his mother to John; darkness covers the land; he dies; the earth quakes.....	Sunday, 30
Message to Jesus of the woman a sinner.....	"	Resurrection of Jesus, and appearance to Mary Magdalene, and to the two disciples at Emmaus; to Peter and the apostles and Thomas.....	Monday, 30
Healing at Capernaum of the blind and dumb possessed; charging the demons that they cease out devilily Beelzebub, and to come out in the name of the Son of Man.....	"	Appearance to seven disciples at Sea of Tiberias, and to 500 at mountain in Galilee.....	Tuesday, 30
Healing of demoniacs in Gergesa, and return to Capernaum.....	"	Final appearance to the disciples at Jerusalem, and ascent to heaven.....	Wednesday, 30
Matthew's feast; healing of woman with issue of blood, and raising of Jairus' daughter.....	"		Thursday, 30
Healing of two blind men, and a dumb possessed; Pharisees and Sadducees.....	"		Friday, 30
Second visit to Nazareth; sending of the twelve.....	"		Saturday, 30
Death of the Baptist; Jesus returns to Capernaum.....	"		Sunday, 30
Crossing of the sea, and feeding of the 5,000; return to Capernaum.....	"		Monday, 30
Discourses in Capernaum respecting the bread of life; Jesus visits the towns of Nazareth, Tiberias, and Saffur; the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman; visits the region of Decapolis; heals one with an impediment in his speech; feeds the 4,000.....	"		Tuesday, 30
Jesus returns to Capernaum; is tempted by the Pharisees; heals a man at Bethsaida; again crosses the sea; heals a blind man at Bethsaida.....	"		Wednesday, 30
Peter's confession that he is the Christ; the transfiguration; Jesus journeys through Galilee, teaching the disciples; at the feast of tabernacles.....	"		Thursday, 30
He teaches in the temple; efforts to arrest him; an adulteress is brought before him; attempt to stone him; healing of a man blind from birth; return to Galilee.....	"		Friday, 30
Feeding of the 5,000; Jesus is rejected at Samaria; Jesus is attended by great multitudes; parable of the good Samaritan.....	"		Saturday, 30
Healing of a dumb possessed man; renewed blasphemy of the Pharisees; dining with a Pharisee, Jesus rebukes hypocrisy; parable of the rich fool.....	"		Sunday, 30

A GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HERODIAN FAMILY, INCLUDING THOSE MEMBERS OF IT WHO ARE MENTIONED IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

HEROD THE KING (chap. 2: 1, 16, 19) married ten wives, among whom were:



(Cambridge Bible for Schools.)

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 Bible Union Notes.
 Biblical Museum.
 Biblical Times not Generally Known.
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 Canstein.
 Chambers's Journal.
 Chautauqua Herald.
 Christian, The.
 Christian Mirror.
 Christian Weekly.
 Chrysostom.
 Cicero.
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 Cook, Rev. Joseph.
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 Cumming, Rev. John, D.D.
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 Webster.
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 Wescott.
 Wilson, Bishop.
 Whedon, D. D.
 Woolsey, President Theodore D.
 Wordsworth, Bishop.
 Zinckle.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

I. **By whom written.** The author of this Gospel has been universally believed to be Mark, or Marcus, designated in Acts 12 : 12, 25; 15 : 37, as John Mark, and in chap. 13 : 5, 13, as John. — *Abbott.*

II. **When it was written.** Upon this point nothing absolutely certain can be affirmed, and the Gospel itself affords us no information. The most direct testimony is that of Irenæus, who says it was after the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul. We may conclude, therefore, that his Gospel was not written before A.D. 63. Again, we may as certainly conclude that it was not written after the destruction of Jerusalem, for it is not likely that he would have omitted to record so remarkable a fulfilment of our Lord's predictions. Hence A.D. 63-70 become our limits, but nearer than this we cannot go. — *Farrar.*

III. **Where it was written.** As to the place, the weight of testimony is uniformly in favor of the belief that the Gospel was written and published at Rome. In this Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, all agree. Chrysostom, indeed, asserts that it was published at Alexandria; but his statement receives no confirmation, as otherwise it could not fail to have done, from any Alexandrine writer. — *Farrar.*

IV. **In what language.** As to the language in which it was written, there never has been any reasonable doubt that it was written in GREEK.

V. **Sources of information.** Mark was not one of the twelve, and there is no reason to believe that he was an eye and ear witness of the events which he has recorded; but an almost unanimous testimony of the early fathers indicates Peter as the source of his information. The most important of these testimonies is that of Papias, who says, "He, the presbyter (John), said: Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote exactly whatever he remembered; but he did not write in order the things which were spoken or done by Christ. For he was neither a hearer nor a follower of the Lord, but, as I said, afterward followed Peter, who made his discourses to suit what was required, without the view of giving a connected digest of the discourses of our Lord. Mark, therefore, made no mistakes when he wrote down circumstances as he recollected them; for he was very careful of one thing, to omit nothing of what he heard, and to say nothing false in what he related." Thus Papias writes of Mark. This testimony is confirmed by other witnesses. — *Abbott.*

VI. **For whom it was written.** The traditional statement is, that it was intended primarily for Gentiles, and especially for those at Rome. A review of the Gospel itself confirms this view. — *Maclear.*

LIFE OF ST. MARK.

1. **MARCUS** was his Latin surname. His Jewish name was John, which is the same as Johanan (*the grace of God*). We can almost trace the steps whereby the former became his prevalent name in the Church. "*John, whose surname was Mark*," in Acts 12 : 12, 25; 15 : 37, becomes "*John*" alone in Acts 13 : 5, 13, "*Mark*" in Acts 15 : 39, and thenceforward there is no change, — Col. 4 : 10. Philem. 24. 2 Tim. 4 : 11.

2. The Evangelist was the son of a certain Mary, a Jewish matron of some position, who dwelt at Jerusalem (Acts 12 : 12), and was probably born of a Hellenistic family in that city. Of his father we know nothing; but we do know that the future Evangelist was cousin of Barnabas of Cyprus, the great friend of St. Paul.

3. His mother would seem to be intimately acquainted with St. Peter; and it was to her house, as to a familiar home, that the apostle repaired (A.D. 44) after his deliverance from prison (Acts 12 : 12). This fact accounts for St. Mark's intimate acquaintance with that apostle, to whom also he probably owed his conversion, for St. Peter calls him "*his son*" (1 Pet. 5 : 13).

4. We hear of him for the first time in Acts 12 : 25, where we find him accompanying Paul and Barnabas on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch, A.D. 45.

5. He next comes before us on the occasion of the earliest missionary journey of the same apostles; A.D. 48, when he joined them as their "minister" (Acts 13 : 5).

6. We find him by Paul's side during his first imprisonment at Rome, A.D. 61-63; and he is acknowledged by him as one of his few fellow-laborers who had been a "comfort" to him during the weary hours of his imprisonment (Col. 4 : 10, 11. Philem. 24).

7. We next have traces of him in 1 Pet. 5 : 13: "The church that is in Babylon . . . saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son." From this we infer that he joined his spiritual father, the great friend of his mother, at Babylon, then and for some hundred years afterwards one of the chief seats of Jewish culture. From Babylon he would seem to have returned to Asia Minor; for during his second imprisonment, A.D. 68, St. Paul, writing to Timothy, charges him to bring Mark with him to Rome, on the ground that he was "*profitable unto him for the ministry*" (2 Tim. 4 : 11). From this point we gain no further information from the New Testament respecting the Evangelist. It is most probable, however, that he did join the Apostle at Rome, whither also St. Peter would seem to have proceeded, and suffered martyrdom along with St. Paul. After the death of these two great pillars of the Church, ecclesiastical tradition affirms that St. Mark visited Egypt, founded the Church of Alexandria, and died by martyrdom. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

FIRST QUARTER.

From January 1, to March 26, 1882.

LESSON I.—JANUARY 1.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL.—MARK 1: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.*—MAL. 3: 1.

TIME.—John the Baptist was born about June, B. C. 5; Jesus was born about December, B. C. 5; the preaching of John the Baptist was during the summer and autumn of A. D. 26; the baptism of Jesus by John in January, A. D. 27; the temptation in the wilderness in January and February, A. D. 27.

PLACE.—The preaching of John the Baptist was in the wilderness of Judea,—a wild, hilly, thinly-inhabited region (not a desert) lying west of the Dead Sea and the Lower Jordan. John's ministry extended as far north as Enon, near Salim, two-thirds of the way up the Jordan from the Dead Sea. The baptism of Jesus was doubtless at the fords of the Jordan, called Bethabara, five miles north-east of Jericho. The temptation occurred probably in the northern part of the wilderness of Judea, between Jerusalem and Jericho on the west, and the Jordan and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount *Quarantania*, near the Jordan, so named because Jesus is supposed to have passed his forty days fasting in one of its caves.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome; John's preaching began in his 13th year as sole ruler; Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (first year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (30th year); Herod Philip, of Trachonitis, Idumea, and the northern regions beyond Jordan.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—The Roman Empire held sway over nearly all the known world. It was a general time of peace, with slight wars only on the frontiers. Greece was subject to Rome politically, but ruled still intellectually, the school of literature and art. She was crowded with temples and statues, and her schools of philosophy and rhetoric were flourishing. According to *Labberton's Outlines*, this was a time of remarkable intellectual activity. Horace and Virgil had died but a few years before. Diodorus Siculus the Greek historian, Strabo the Greek geographer (B. C. 54—A. D. 24), Ovid (B. C. 43—A. D. 18), Livy (B. C. 59—A. D. 17), and Seneca, who died A. D. 65, were living during the life of Christ.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—The ministry of John in the wilderness (vers. 1-8) is described also in Matt. 3: 1-12, and Luke 3: 1-18. The baptism of Jesus (vers. 9-11) in Matt. 3: 13-17, and Luke 3: 21-23. The temptation of Jesus (vers. 12, 13) in Matt. 4: 1-11, and Luke 4: 1-13. A view of the whole ministry of John from another standpoint is given in John 1: 5-51.

INTRODUCTION.

For the life of Mark and an account of his Gospel, when, where, and for whom written, and its characteristics and contents, see *General Introduction*.

The object of Mark being to relate the *official life and ministry* of our Lord, he begins with his *baptism*, and, as a necessary introduction to it, with the *preaching of John the Baptist*.—*Alford*.

As not essential for this object, the few facts which are recorded in the first two chapters of the Gospels by St. Matthew and St. Luke are omitted.—*Godwin*.

1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, ¹ the Son of God;

2. As it is written in the prophets, ² Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3. ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

The beginning of the gospel ¹ of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Even as it is written in ² Isaiah the prophet,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way;

The voice of one crying ³ in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight;

¹ Matt. 14: 33. Luke 1: 35. John 1: 34. ² Mal. 3: 1. Matt. 11: 10. Luke 7: 27. ³ Isa. 40: 3. Matt. 3: 3. Luke 3: 4. John 1: 25, 23.

EXPLANATORY.

The Title. (Ver. 1.) 1. The beginning of the gospel. This verse is a kind of title of the section describing the mission of John the Baptist, and the entrance of Jesus upon his mission of proclaiming the gospel. As if he had said, "In the way, and at the time, I now describe, began the gospel of Jesus."—*J. Alexander*. In the events of the Saviour's forerunner he finds the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.—*Morison*. Klosterman supposes that it has reference to the book of Mark as the incipient stage of the career of the everlasting gospel. All the events of the public life of Christ were according to his idea, but the *beginning* of the gospel; and the end is not yet. See *Morison on Mark*. The gospel. Shortened from "good spell," i.e., good story, news, tidings. The best news the world ever received was brought by Jesus Christ; nay, more, Jesus Christ himself *was* the good news. His gospel is, in truth, *a gospel*, just because it is *gospel*, and THE GOSPEL, not *history proper*, or *annals proper*, or a *regular and exhaustive biography*. The Evangelist meant his narrative to be a *simple biographical representation of the gospel*. It is a simple mirroring or photographing of him who is, in his own living personality, the sum, substance, and subject of the gospel,—the Living Gospel,—as it were, the gospel alive.—*Morison*. Jesus Christ the Son of God. (Acts 9: 20.) This is the full title of our Lord, and not without design. He would set forth this adorable Saviour as "the Son of God," and also as perfect Man. "*Jesus*" is the official title for "*Saviour*" (Matt. 1: 21). "*Christ*" is the Greek title for "*Anointed*," as the term *Messiah* in the Hebrew. And "*the Son of God*" is the title, not only of his divinity, but of his Divine Sonship,—the Second Person in the glorious Trinity.—*Jacobus*. Jesus in his humanity, Christ (Messiah) in his office, Son of God in his eternal nature.—*Cook*.

Preparing the Way of the Lord. (Vers. 2-8.) 2. As it is written in the prophets. The quotations which follow are from two prophets, Malachi (3: 1) and Isaiah (40: 3). The *Revised Version* reads for *in the prophets*, *in Isaiah the prophet*, in which case "the passage from Malachi is strictly preliminary. It is the mere porchway through which we are ushered into the quotation from Isaiah," which is the essential passage, on which the thought of the writer chiefly dwelt.—*Morison*. My messenger. This means, that John was the messenger of whom Malachi spoke.—*Jacobus*. The imagery is drawn from the great strategical works of the conquerors of the East. They sent a herald before them to call the people of the countries through which they marched, to prepare for their approach.—*Ellicott*. Before thy face. In advance of thy coming. Prepare thy way. See on next verse.

3. The voice of one crying (*proclaiming*) in the wilderness. John was called a *voice*, (1) because the whole man was a sermon (*Farrar*); (2) because he would call no attention to himself as a person, but only to the Saviour whose way he came to prepare. As Quesnel says of the true teacher and preacher, "he should, if possible, be nothing but a voice, which should be always heard and never seen." Prepare ye the way of the Lord. The messengers sent before the Eastern kings prepared the way for the chariots and armies of their monarchs. A "king's highway" had to be carried through the open land of the wilderness, valleys filled up, and hills levelled (the words used are, of course, poetical in their greatness), winding by-paths straightened, for the march of the great army. Interpreted in its spiritual application, the wilderness was the world lying in evil.—*Ellicott*. John prepared the way for Christ in this wilderness by preaching repentance, awakening the conscience, manifesting the danger and the evil of sin, showing the need of a Saviour, and the value and the possibility of a better life. John the Baptist still, in each experience, goes before the coming of the Saviour. And we all should prepare the

4. ¹ John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance ² for the remission of sins.

5. ³ And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

John came, who baptized in ⁴ the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And ⁵ there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing

¹ Matt. 3:1. Luke 3:3. John 3:23. ² or, unto. ³ Matt. 3:5.

way of the Lord. (1) Fill up the valleys, the sins of omission, — defects of prayer, of faith, of love, of work. (2) Bring down the mountains of pride, sin, selfishness, unbelief, worldliness. (3) Straighten out all crooked places, crooked dealings with others, crooked ways of sin, settle difficulties, confess sins. (4) Smooth the rough places, — the harshness of temper and manner, the little foxes that spoil the vines, the want of courtesy, which mar the beauty of holiness. — *P.* Prepare ye. John could not, by his single agency, prepare the hearts of the people. The co-agency of the people was indispensable, and hence the herald of the Lord called upon them to act. Self-action would, indeed, not be enough, but there must be a response to God's initiatory "knock." — *Morison.* Make his paths straight. Roads that have not been properly prepared at the beginning. So are the ways of men when no preparation has been made for the GREAT KING. When John cried, *Make his paths straight*, he meant, *Have done* with all your crooked ways of acting. *Be straightforward with yourselves. Let there be no winding and doubling. Be honest. The Lord will not enter hypocritical souls.* — *Morison.*

4. Now comes the fulfilment of what was written as quoted in the previous verses. John. Called the *Baptist*, because he baptized those who repented under his preaching. He was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, of the priestly order, a relative of Jesus, born in the summer of B. C. 5, and consequently now (A. D. 26) about 30 or 31 years old. — *P.* The year during which John began his ministry was probably a *sabbatic year* (Exod. 23:11). If this year was now observed by the Jews, according to its original intent, it was a most appropriate time for the Baptist to begin his labors, the people having no burdensome agricultural tasks to occupy them, and being thus at liberty to attend upon his instructions. — *Andrew's Life of Christ*, p. 139. Baptize, preach. An explanation of how John performed the duty of forerunner, according to the prophecy. — *Schaff.* Baptize. See under *baptism* below. In the wilderness. The wilderness to which John withdrew stretches, far and near, over the whole eastern part of Judea, beginning almost at Jerusalem, and reaching away, under different names, to the Dead Sea and the southern desert, as its distant limits. It is a dreary waste of rocky valleys; in some parts stern and terrible, — the rocks cleft and shattered by earthquakes and convulsions, into rifts and gorges sometimes a thousand feet in depth, though only thirty or forty in width. — *Geikie.* Preach. Publicly announce, proclaim in a heraldic way. — *Morison.* The baptism. Symbolical or ceremonial washing, such as the Mosaic Law prescribed as a sign of moral renovation, and connected with the sacrificial types of expiation, to indicate the internal connection of atonement and sanctification. — *Dr. Alexander.* Ablution in the East is, indeed, of itself almost a religious duty. The dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load: its removal is refreshment and happiness. It was, hence, impossible to see a convert go down into a stream, travel-worn and soiled with dust, and in a moment emerge pure and fresh, without feeling that the symbol suited and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart. — *Geikie.* Baptism (not the baptism) of repentance; i.e., a ceremonial washing, which involved and denoted a profession of repentance, or a thorough change of mind, both of judgment and of feeling, with respect to sin. — *Dr. Alexander.* Very literally, without the article, baptism of repentance, i.e., repentance-baptism, or penitential-baptism. It was thus, not simply the duty of baptism, that John proclaimed. It was the duty of that peculiar kind of baptism which mirrors forth in its outward act the incipient acceptance of the inward purification which is essential to the enjoyment of the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom. — *Morison.* For (or unto) remission (without the article), with a view to remission or for the purpose of promoting it, not directly or efficiently, but as an indispensable prerequisite. Remission: losing, leaving, i.e., letting go unpunished, which is essentially the same with pardon or forgiveness. — *Alexander.* Remission of sins, or forgiveness, is more than the taking away of the punishment due for our sins. It is the being received back into the family of God, as his true children, so that we may draw near to God as to a loving father, who treats us as if we never had sinned. — *P.*

5. Went out to him. That which, no doubt, drew the whole population in such crowds to the desert shores of the Jordan, was the mysterious yet distinct assertion that

6. And John was ¹clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat ²locusts and wild honey;

7. And preached, saying, ³There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

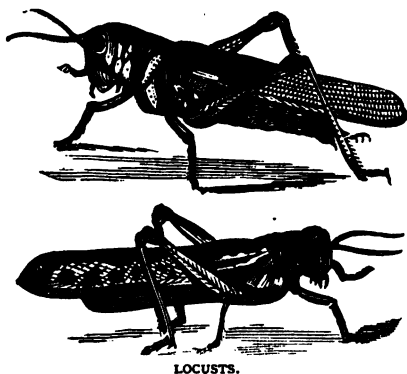
their sins. And John was ⁶clothed with camel's hair, and ^{had} a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he ⁷preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

¹ Matt. 3: 4. ² Lev. 11: 22. ³ Matt. 3: 11. John 1: 27. Acts 13: 25. *

the "kingdom of heaven was at hand;" that kingdom of which the belief was as universal as of the personal coming of the Messiah. — *Henry Milman, D.D.* The nation was daily expecting the appearance of "the wise and perfect prophet, who should restore the tribes of Israel, reprove the times, and appease the wrath of God, before it broke out in fury." — *Geikie.* All the land. The word is used in a free and easy and popular way; and yet, as Alexander remarks, it must mean more than *many*, namely, the great bulk and body of the population. — *Morison.* It included representatives of every class, Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 3: 7), tax-gatherers (Luke 3: 12), soldiers (Luke 3: 14), rich and poor (Luke 3: 10). — *G. F. Maclear.* In the river Jordan. We hear of him at Bethabara, the fords, about five miles north-east of Jericho, where Jesus was baptized; and at Enon, near Salim, some 35 miles farther north. Confessing their sins. From the form and expression this does not seem to have been merely "showing a contrite spirit," "confessing themselves sinners," but a particular and individual confession; not, however, made privately to John, but before the people. — *Alford.* No one truly repents who does not also confess, — to God the sins against God, to man the sins against man, ever also making restitution as far as possible. The unrepentant sinner justifies himself; the repentant sinner acknowledges that he has sinned, and is sorry.

6. Was clothed. The evangelist draws our attention to three points in reference to the Baptist: (a) HIS APPEARANCE. He recalled the asceticism of the Essene. His raiment was of the coarsest texture, such as was worn by Elijah (2 Kings 1: 8) and the prophets generally (Zech. 13: 4). Clothed with camel's hair, with a kind of tunic or shirt coarsely woven of camel's hair, "one

of the most admirable materials for clothing: it keeps out the heat, cold, and rain." — *Discovery of Jerusalem.* His girdle, an ornament often of the greatest richness in Oriental costume, and of the finest linen (Jer. 13: 1. Ezek. 16: 10) or cotton, or embroidered with silver and gold (Dan. 10: 5. Rev. 1: 13; 15: 6) was of skin, i.e., untanned leather (2 Kings 1: 8), like that worn by the Bedawin of the present day. (b) HIS DIET was the plainest and simplest, — locusts and wild honey. Locusts were permitted as an article of food (Lev. 11: 21, 22). "The common brown locust is about three inches in length, and the general form is that of a grasshopper." — *Dr. Harris.* Thomson, *Land and Book*, states that though tolerated, as an article of food, only by the very poorest people, locusts are still eaten by the Bedawin. Burckhardt mentions having seen locust-shops at Medina and Tayf. After being dried in the sun



the locusts are eaten with butter and honey. Sometimes they are sprinkled with salt, and either broiled or roasted. Sometimes they are ground and pounded, and then mixed with flour and water, and made into cakes. Thomson adds that *wild honey*, i.e., honey made by wild bees, is still gathered from trees in the wilderness and from rocks in the wadies. (c) HIS MESSAGE. (1) That the members of the elect nation were *all* morally unclean, and *all* needed moral and spiritual regeneration; (2) that One mightier than he was coming; (3) that he would baptize with the Holy Ghost. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

The Announcement that the Lord had come. (Vers. 7, 8.) 7. Preached. Proclaimed (like a herald). Cometh one mightier than I. He called attention away from himself, who was but a man, to the Divine Saviour, who was able to save them from all their sins, who had all power with God and man, could wield all influences, who

8. ¹ I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you ² with the Holy Ghost.

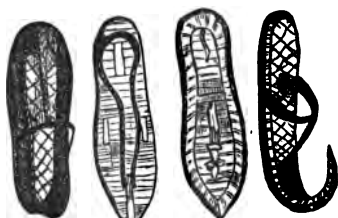
9. ³ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

I baptized you with water ; 8 but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

And it came to pass in those 9 days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

¹ Acts 1 : 5 ; 11 : 16 ; 19 : 4. ² Isa. 44 : 3. Joel 2 : 28. Acts 2 : 4 ; 10 : 45 ; 11 : 15, 16. 1 Cor. 12 : 13. ³ Matt. 3 : 13. Luke 3 : 21.

could conquer all enemies. And he pictures out to them the greatness of the Messiah, by declaring, that, great as John might appear to them, Jesus exceeded him in greatness more than a prince exceeds the meanest slaves that fasten the thongs of his sandals. — *P. Latchet*. Diminutive of *latch*, like the Fr. *lacet* dim. of *lace* ; comes from the Latin *laqueus* = a “noose,” and means any thing that catches. We now only apply latch to the catch of a door or gate. We speak of a “shoe-lace,” and “lace” is radically the same word. Here it denotes the thong or fastening by which the sandal was fastened to the foot (comp. Gen. 14 : 23. Isa. 5 : 27). The office of bearing and unfastening the sandals of great personages fell to the meanest slaves. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. Not worthy to unloose. John alleges that there was no standard of comparison by means of which the relative superiority of the Messiah to himself could be measured. He did not even deserve the honor of being permitted to stoop down and undo the latches of his Master's sandals. That was a far higher honor than any man deserved. How exceedingly high, then, must the dignity of Jesus be! — *Morison*.



SANDALS.

8. **Indeed.** He now points out one of the things in which Jesus is so superior to himself, — as much as the Holy Ghost is superior to water, as much as the cleansing effects of the Holy Ghost upon the soul are to the cleansing of the body by water. He shall baptize you with (or *in*) the Holy Ghost. This is not to be referred to the common influences of the Spirit, which is peculiarly the Spirit's work ; but rather to the sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which was peculiarly Christ's work (John 16 : 7). Our Saviour himself evidently pointed to the Pentecostal season, when he said (Acts 1 : 5), “For John truly baptized in water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” That it could not refer to the common influences of the Spirit, seems evident also from the fact that Jesus, at his ascension, spoke of the baptism in the Spirit as future, yet he had, previous to this, breathed upon his disciples, saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20 : 22). — *Bible Union Notes on Mark*. There is a real distinction between the indwelling of the Spirit in the heart, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. The baptism of the Spirit is that special influence upon men which was sent on the day of Pentecost, and in every true revival of religion since, — a pervading influence, a power from God which moves the hearts of men, convincing them of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. It is not easy to describe it, but no one who has felt it can mistake it. It is this power which Christ sends, and by which the world is to be converted to God. — *P.*

Christ's Preparation for His Work. (Vers. 9-13.) 9. In those days. While John was preaching and baptizing. It is probable that he had been preaching about six months during the summer and autumn of A. D. 26. St. Luke tells us that the baptism of our Lord did not take place till “all the people had been baptized” (Luke 3 : 21). So that the baptism of Jesus was probably late in the autumn of that year. Jesus came from Nazareth. His home with his parents, where he lived till he was now about 30 years old (Luke 3 : 23), the age at which the Levites began their ministry, and the rabbis their teaching. He left Nazareth, and came to Bethabara for the purpose of being baptized, thus commencing his ministry. The name *Nazareth* means a *branch*. It is a small city in Lower Galilee, about 70 miles north of Jerusalem, and nearly half-way from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. It was situated “among the hills which constitute the southern ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the Plain of Esdraelon.” — *Professor George W. Clark*. Galilee, meaning a *ring* or a *circle*, was probably first given to a small “circuit” among the mountains of Naphtali (Josh. 20 : 7), where were situated the 20 towns given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kings 9 : 11). The name may have contained originally an allusion to one or more of the circular

10. ¹And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens ²opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11. And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*,
³Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: And a voice came out of the heavens, *11* Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

¹ Matt. 3:16. John 1:32.

² *cloven, or rent.*

³ Ps. 2:7. Matt. 3:17. Ch. 9:7.

plains of those mountains. It came afterward to be applied to the whole northern portion of Palestine north of Samaria, and which, according to Josephus, was very populous, containing no less than 240 towns and villages. — *G. W. Clark*. **Was baptized of John.** In receiving baptism at the hands of John, he not only gave his approval to his ministry and baptism, but also identified himself with his people as their Exemplar, Elder Brother, and Head. Having taken upon himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, he commenced his public ministry by placing himself on a level with man, and receiving the baptism of repentance, and thereby the public testimony of his Father's approval. As Jesus had nothing for which to exercise repentance, his baptism pointed to the vicarious nature of his work. — *Bible Union, Notes on Mark*. His baptism, as it was our Lord's *closing* act of obedience under the law in his hitherto concealed life of legal submission, his fulfilling all righteousness, so it was his *solemn inauguration and anointing for the higher official life of mediatorial satisfaction* which was now opening upon him. (See Rom. 1:3, 4.) We must not forget that the *working out of perfect righteousness in our flesh* by the entire and spotless keeping of God's law (Deut. 6:25) was, in the main, *accomplished during the thirty years previous to our Lord's official ministry*. — *Alford*. His baptism was finely significant. It was a visible picture of the invisible descent into his humanity of the fulness of the Divine Spirit. He hence became full — officially — of the Holy Spirit. — *Morison*. **In Jordan.** Probably at the ford near Jericho where John had been baptizing. Here the Israelites under Joshua passed over on dry ground (Josh. 3:17), and twice afterward was it miraculously opened by Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:8, 14). From John 1:28, it would seem that John was at Bethany (Bethabara of the common version), situated at this ford, on the eastern side of the river. — *Bible Union Notes*.

10. **Straightway.** Immediately, as soon as he was baptized. **Coming up out of the water;** i.e., going up to the bank of the river. — *Morison*. He went up praying, as we learn from St. Luke 3:21. We find solemn prayer preceding (1) our Lord's baptism; (2) his choice of the Twelve (Luke 6:12); (3) his transfiguration (Luke 9:29); (4) his agony in the garden (Matt. 26:39). — *Maclear*. He went up leading forth, as it were, and lifting up with himself, the drowned world. — *S. Gregory Nazianzen*. **He saw.** John also witnessed this baptism of the Spirit (John 1:32). **The heavens.** The skies. **Opened.** Parted, rent asunder; as revealing the spiritual heavens beyond; the visible manifestation of a way opened from God above to this world. **The Spirit like a dove descending upon him.** The Holy Spirit descended, not only in the *manner* of a dove, but in *bodily shape* (Luke 3:22); which I cannot understand in any but the literal sense as **THE BODILY SHAPE OF A DOVE** seen by the Baptist. This is the ancient and the *only honest* interpretation. Two circumstances may be noted. (1) It was as a *dove*, — the Spirit as manifested in our Lord was *gentle and benign*. (2) It was *permanent*. It *abode upon him* (John 1:32). — *Alford*. It was as a *dove* that the Spirit descended on him, — a most captivating symbolism. All along the ages it is the power of his gentleness and tenderness and meekness, — his love, in short, — that has been victorious. He has "wooed" and won. — *Morison*. We are apt to think of Jesus Christ as the only great manifestation of God's love. But the Spirit is another manifestation of God's love. The *dove* expresses God's abiding love in our hearts; and ever the Spirit produces, in the hearts of those who dwell in the Spirit, the dove-like nature, gentle, loving, attractive. — *P.*

11. **A voice from heaven.** The first of the three heavenly voices to be heard during our Lord's ministry; viz., at (1) his baptism: (2) his transfiguration (Mark 9:7); (3) in the courts of the temple during Holy Week (John 12:28). This voice attested in the presence of his forerunner the divine nature of our Lord, and inaugurated his public ministry. The baptism was a very important event in our Lord's life. **My beloved Son.** Here the whole Trinity united at the scene. The Son is consecrated by the Spirit, and proclaimed by the Father. **Well pleased.** The English here, at least to modern ears, is scarcely strong enough. "I delight" comes the nearest, perhaps, to that ineffable *complacency* which is manifestly intended. — *D. Brown*. This same testimony comes

12. ¹ And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; ² and the angels ministered unto him.

And straightway the Spirit ¹² driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the ¹³ wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

¹ Matt. 4: 1. Luke 4: 1. ² Matt. 4: 11.

to every believing soul, who, bowing before Christ, accepts him as Lord of all. — *J. L. Hurlbut.*

12. **The Spirit.** The Holy Spirit which he had just received. **Driveth him.** The word indicates a sudden and forcible impulsion: carried away by an irresistible impulse, our Lord went at once to the desert. — *Cook.* **Into the wilderness.** Tradition has placed the scene of Christ's temptation in that part of the wilderness of Judea (see note on ver. 4) which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, and particularly in the mountain called, in modern geography, Quarantania, from this forty days' fast. Naked and arid, like a mountain of malediction, it rises precipitously from a scorched and desert plain, and looking over the sluggish, bituminous waters of the Sodomitic Sea, — thus offering a sharp contrast to the Mountain of Beatitudes, and the limpid crystal of the Lake of Gennesareth. — *Farrar.*

13. **Forty days tempted of Satan; i.e., undergoing temptation by Satan.** It was fit, and perhaps inevitable, that our Lord should come into personal collision and conflict with the great adversary whose works and usurped dominion he had come to destroy. — *Morison.* Matthew gives the three closing temptations, or the sum and crowning conflict; but Mark and Luke say that he was tempted during the forty days in which he was fasting in the wilderness. Here were his great introductory temptations to his life-long conflict with Satan.

I. **Why was Christ thus tempted at the beginning of his work of redemption?** (1) Because it was impossible that one who came to overthrow the kingdom of Satan should not be attacked by the great adversary at the very threshold. (2) It was to test him whether he was the true Messiah, the real Son of God, qualified for his work of redemption. (3) It was the revealing to him as the Son of man the great work he had come to do. (4) It was to prepare him, by being tempted like as we are, and yet gaining the victory, to "succor them that are tempted." The three great temptations mentioned by Matthew are the three great classes of temptations to which men are now exposed.

II. **How could Christ, a perfectly holy being, be tempted?** In every act of sin there are two distinct steps. (1) There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural, *is not wrong.* (2) There is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, and that *is sin.* Sin is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will. There were in Christ all the natural appetites of mind and body. He suffered, being tempted, from the force of desire. But there was *obedience* at the expense of tortured natural feeling. Remember this; for the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Christ destroys the reality of temptation, and converts the whole of his history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were represented, not felt. — *F. W. Robertson.* "His one thing to be tempted. — *Esculus.* Another thing to fall. — *Shakespeare.*

Satan. Literally *the Satan*, just as we say *the devil*. Satan (Hebrew) means adversary, just as *devil* (Greek) means *accuser*, or slanderer. He is no myth. — *Morison.* Here the existence and personality of Satan are placed before us in the most distinct language. It would be the boldest of all paradoxes to assert that the Scriptures do not teach the existence of an evil power whom they call the Enemy, the Accuser, the Devil. — *Ellicott.* It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal devil, than in great bad leaders on earth. To deny the fact of the Devil, is to lay much heavier charges of evil on the nature of man that does the belief in Satan. — *P.* **With the wild beasts.** In our Lord's time these might include the panther, the bear, the wolf, the hyena, possibly the lion. The implied thought is partly with their presence added to the terrors of the temptation, partly that in his being protected from them there was the fulfilment of the promise in the very psalm which furnished the tempter with his chief weapon, that the true child of God should trample under foot "the lion and the adder," the "young lion and the dragon" (Ps. 91: 13). — *Ellicott.* **Angels ministered unto him.** At the close of the temptation, or possibly after different attacks of temptation during the 40 days. Angels were spiritual beings, probably in visible form on this occasion. Alone in the contest, he had these companions after his victory. "Ministered" most naturally means "supplied him with food," as in the case of Elijah. (1 Kings 19: 5). Others think, "gave him spiritual companionship," to support him. — *Schaff.* Probably the angels did both. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Of the commentaries on Mark, probably that of James Morison (London) is among the best. But many others are excellent; as, Abbott's, Ellicott's, Meyer's, Schaff's *Popular Commentary*, Canon Cook's *Bible Commentary*, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools*, and many others. Much help is gained also from *The Life of Christ*, by Farrar, by Geikie, by Andrews, and others. Excellent quotations from various authors are given in Dr. Glentworth Butler's *Bible Reader's Commentary*, Eggleston's *Christ in Literature*, Ford's *Gospel of Mark illustrated*, and *Choice Notes on Mark*, which is chiefly a selection from Ford's work. Tristram's *Land of Israel*, Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, *The Land and the Book*, are ever helpful.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **John in the wilderness.** We have no record of John's daily life, but that of one who, in saintliness of spirit, trod in his steps, is still preserved. St. Anthony, in the deserts of Egypt, was wont to pass whole nights in prayer, and that not once, but often, to the astonishment of men. He ate once a day, after the setting of the sun: his food was bread with salt, his drink nothing but water. Flesh and wine he never tasted. When he slept, he was content with a rush mat, but mostly he lay on bare ground. He would not anoint himself with oil, saying that it was more fit for young men to be earnest in subduing the body, than to seek things which softened it. The picture may not suit in some particulars; but as a glimpse of the mortified life of the desert, in its best aspect, it may serve to realize that of John, in the loneliness of the rough wilderness of Judea. — *Geikie*.

II. **Preparing the way.** When Ibrahim Pasha proposed to visit certain places on Lebanon, the emirs and sheiks sent forth a general proclamation, somewhat in the style of Isaiah's exhortation, to all the inhabitants, to assemble along the proposed route, and prepare the way before him. The same was done in 1845, when the present sultan visited Brusa. The stones were gathered out, the crooked places straightened, the rough ones made level and smooth. — *The Land and the Book* (1: 105, 106).

III. **Repentance as a preparation for the coming of Christ.** Dr. Justin Edwards says that the great revival of 1825-28 was preceded by a temperance revival; and that, of 300 towns through which the temperance reform swept, in 275 there followed a revival of religion. The revival of 1865 in Dr. Cuyler's church in Brooklyn began in the same way. Repenting of this sin of intemperance prepared the way for Christ. The same truth may be illustrated (1) by the clearing away the brush and wood in a new country, in order that crops may be planted; (2) by the cleansing of the house in order to receive friends.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 2. It is our business to prepare the way for Christ.
2. True repentance, forsaking and hating sin, is the heart preparation for Christ to dwell within us.
3. Ver. 3. The preacher and the teacher should be as a voice, hiding themselves behind the cross, and calling attention only to the Redeemer.
4. Ver. 5. True repentance is accompanied by confession of sin.
5. Ver. 9. The true follower of Christ must follow him in this public profession of religion. It is not true, as sometimes said, that Christ professed religion only by his life. — *Abbott*.
6. Ver. 10. The Holy Spirit is like a dove, gentle, tender, loving, wooing, attracting; as well as like fire, enlightening, cheering, life-giving, sin-consuming.
7. It was while Jesus *prayed*, that the heavens were opened, and the Spirit came upon him.
8. Ver. 11. To all who are willing to be like Christ, comes the same voice saying, "Thou art my beloved son."
9. Ver. 13. At the beginning of the Christian life comes the great temptation, — the battle as to who shall rule the soul: its success is *conversion*.
10. The greatest battles of the world are fought on the silent battle-field of the heart: there greater victories are won, greater heroisms done, than at Thermopylæ or Waterloo.
11. The greatest temptations often come close after the highest and sweetest experiences, — as to Elijah, — after communion-seasons, after revivals.
12. Christ has fought the battle, and gained the victory, with precisely the weapons which are in the hands of all Christians.
13. After the battle and victory come sweet blessings from heaven, beyond the power of the untried heart to conceive.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Every lesson should be like a tree, rooted deep in experimental truth, with one main trunk, dividing into several branches. The main trunk of this lesson is PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST. After introductory questions upon Mark and his Gospel, we find that this main trunk divides into four branches. (1) *The command to prepare* (vers. 1-3) as expressed in these two prophets. (2) *Preparation by repentance* (vers. 4-6). John and his preaching; how repentance prepares for Christ; why confession as well as repentance. (3) *Preparation by pointing to Christ* (vers. 7, 8). Note the two ways in which John shows the superiority of Christ. (4) *Christ's preparation for his work*. This again divides into three: (1) by *his baptism*, profession of religion; (2) by *receiving the Holy Spirit*; (3) by *being tempted*, and gaining the victory.

LESSON II. — JANUARY 8.

JESUS IN GALILEE. — MARK I: 14-28.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.* — ISA. 9:2.

TIME. — April, May, A. D. 28. More than a year after the last lesson. In the second year of our Lord's ministry.

PLACE. — The north-west shores of the Sea of Galilee, chiefly in the vicinity of Capernaum. John was imprisoned in the Castle Machærus, on the southern border of Perea, east of the Dead Sea.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome, 15th year (17th from his association with Augustus Cesar). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (third year); Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — The year following the temptation in the wilderness (January, A. D. 27) was spent in the following manner (see Andrews's *Life of Christ*): —

February, A. D. 27. — Jesus returns from the wilderness of temptation to Bethabara, where John bears testimony to him (John 1: 15-37).

February, A. D. 27. — Here Jesus gains his first disciples, Philip, Andrew, and Peter, who belonged in Bethsaida of Galilee, and all return to Galilee (John 1: 38-51).

March, A. D. 27. — Jesus performs his first miracle at Cana (John 2: 1-11).

March, A. D. 27. — Goes to Capernaum for a few days (John 2: 12, 13).

April 11-18, A. D. 27. — Goes to Jerusalem to the first passover of his public ministry.

April, A. D. 27. — Drives the money-changers from the temple (John 2: 14-35).

April, A. D. 27. — Conversation with Nicodemus (John 3: 1-21).

May to September, A. D. 27. — Preaching and baptizing in Judea (John 4: 2).

Autumn, A. D. 27. — Driven from Judea by Pharisees, he leaves for Galilee (John 4: 1-3).

December, A. D. 27. — Going through Samaria, he talks with the woman by Jacob's well (John 4: 4-42). Heals nobleman's son (John 4: 46-54).

January to March, A. D. 28. — Period of retirement in Galilee. John the Baptist imprisoned (Matt. 4: 12).

March 30 to April 5, A. D. 28. — Attends passover at Jerusalem. Cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5).

April, A. D. 28. — Returns to Galilee (Luke 4: 14. Matt. 4: 12); preaches at Nazareth, his early home; but being rejected there (Luke 4: 16-32), he goes to Capernaum, where he makes his home (Matt. 4: 12-17). Then follows the lesson for to-day.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — The general view of Christ's ministry given (vers. 14, 15) is related also in Matt. 4: 17, and Luke 4: 14, 15. Then come in the accounts of his Galilean ministry found in John 4: 46-54, followed by Luke 4: 16-31. Vers. 16-20 are reported in Matt. 4: 18-22, Luke 5: 1-11; and vers. 21-28 in Luke 4: 31-37.

INTRODUCTION.

An interval of more than a year is passed over in silence by Mark, between the last verse of the last lesson, and the first verse of this. A considerable part of this time was

14. ¹ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, ² preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15. And saying, ³ The time is fulfilled, and the

Now after that John was ¹⁴ delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time ¹⁵ is fulfilled, and the kingdom

¹ Matt. 4: 12. ² Matt. 4: 23. ³ Dan. 9: 25. Gal. 4: 4. Eph. 1: 10.

spent by Jesus in Judea, till so great an opposition arose against him that he left Judea, and spent almost two years in Galilee, and the regions round about, with only an occasional visit to Jerusalem.

The first two verses express the general topic and object of Christ's preaching, followed by some of the preliminary steps in the outward organization of his kingdom.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Conditions of Entering it. — Vers.

14, 15. 14. After that John was put in prison (*betrayed* or *delivered up* to prison). John's preaching and sharp reproof of the sins of the leaders had aroused so much opposition that he sought safety in the territories of Herod Antipas in Southern Galilee, and in Perea along the Jordan. To this Herod, John owed his imprisonment. — *P.* The cause assigned before the people for his arrest was that John had ventured to reprove Herod for his unlawful marriage with Herodias (Mark 6: 17-20); but political fears had probably, in reality, more to do with it. Antipas, it seems, passed his time now in Tiberias, then in Machærus, on his southern border, in Perea. In him, the hierarchy and rabbis at Jerusalem, impotent themselves, found an instrument to crush the unlicensed teacher who so freely condemned them, and had so great a hold upon the people. Pilate, ever fearful of any popular movement, may have demanded, at their crafty instigation, that action should be taken; and these influences, added to the apprehensions of Antipas himself, brought matters to a crisis. Sending a band of soldiers and police northwards to the Jordan, a distance of from six to eight hours, they apprehended the Baptist, likely by night, when the people were not astir, and, binding the defenceless man, hurried him off to the fortress Machærus. This castle, known as "the diadem," from its crown-like seat on the lofty rocks, and as "the black tower," lay on the east side of the Dead Sea, almost on a line with Bethlehem. It was the southern stronghold of Perea, as the Macedonian colony of Pella was the northern. — *Geikie.* Jesus came into Galilee. From Jerusalem and Judea. He left because the Jews sought to kill him (John 7: 1). This is the turning-point in the gospel history. Up to this time the preaching of our Lord at Jerusalem and in Judea had met with a certain degree of toleration, and in many cases even of acceptance. But after this it becomes changed. — *Ellicott.* The assumption of authority at the purification of the temple (John 2: 14-35), and the sharp reproof, which that act implied, of their own criminal remissness, must have been in the highest degree offensive to them. The healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5: 1-16), violating their traditions of the sabbath by working a public miracle on that day, opened the way to proceed against him as a breaker of the law. There can be little doubt that he was now brought before the Sanhedrim, and that the discourse given in John 5: 17-47 was spoken before that tribunal (5: 33). Whether any judicial action was now taken, does not appear; but from John 7: 1 (he could not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him), we may infer that it was formally determined upon to seize him, and put him to death, if found in Judea. — *Cond. fr. Andrews's Life of Christ.* John's imprisonment was the public expression of this hatred and opposition to him to whom John ever pointed, and it was no longer safe for Jesus to remain in Judea, nor of any use as to the purposes of his work. — *P.* Came into Galilee, and commenced the great Galilean ministry. Galilee was the most northern and the most populous of the three provinces into which the Romans had divided Palestine. It was to Roman Palestine what the manufacturing districts are to England, covered with busy towns and teeming villages, Roman custom-houses and thriving fisheries. See Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 375-377. — *Maclear.* The gospel. Good news. See Lesson I., ver. 1. The kingdom of God. This is the good news which Jesus preached, — that God had sent a Saviour to save them from their sins, and to begin the reign of God among men with new helps, new hearts, new light, new influences of the Spirit. See next verse.

15. The time is fulfilled; i.e., the time (foretold by the prophets, when Christ was to appear) required for the preparation of the world to receive the gospel. All God's long training and preparing the world was now complete. It seems strange that a Saviour for the world should wait till the world was 4,000 years old before he came. But the world

¹ kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16. ² Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

And passing along by the ¹⁶ sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers.

¹ Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17. ² Matt. 4: 18. Luke 5: 4.

was not ready. The higher mathematics cannot be taught to the child that has not learned the rules of arithmetic, nor the work of a man be given to one not trained to the strength and knowledge and judgment of a man. It was not till this time that the world, by experience, by unity of government and language, by the training of the Jews in the law and knowledge of God, and at last by the preaching of John the Baptist, was ready to receive the gospel of the kingdom of God. — *P.* The kingdom of God. What Matthew in general calls *the kingdom of heaven* (see Matt. 4: 17) is designated by Mark and Luke *the kingdom of God*. The two expressions *the kingdom of heaven* and *the kingdom of God* vary only in phase. The kingdom is divine, and hence heavenly. It is a thing of heaven. It originated in heaven, tends to heaven, culminates in heaven. It is a heavenly community, with a heavenly sovereign at its head. All its objects are heavenly, whether they be on earth or in heaven. Our whole earth should have been a part of heaven. But it is a runaway world, having gone off from heaven. It is not, however, finally lost to heaven. God, — the great moral Governor — has not, and will not, let it go. He desires — not in the use of physical omnipotence, but by glorious moral means — to win it back. Long, long ago he took the initiative for the accomplishment of this end. He reclaimed a foothold for heavenly institutions. And now the time was come for establishing, in a somewhat developed and, as it were, completed form, the heavenly community, — “the Kingdom of God.” — *Morrison*. Is at hand. This kingdom was now to begin. The Messiah, its king, was come to inaugurate the new reign. That was begun which was prophesied in Dan. 2: 44; 7: 14. — *P.* Repent ye. Not mere remorse, but conversion and reformation, or turning away from sin and unto God. The Greek word means change of mind, or heart. — *Schaff*. They were called upon to repent *now*; for never had they so much reason to repent, and so much help to repent, and so many blessings if they did repent, as the coming of Christ with his kingdom now brought them. — *P.* This cry, “Repent,” shows (a) that men were in a false position; (b) that they had power to alter it; (c) that such power was immediately associated with a great opportunity. — *Joseph Parker*. Believe the gospel. Faith in the gospel, that is, in the glad tidings of salvation, is thus demanded in connection with the first preaching of Jesus. Faith in a personal Redeemer, faith in him as our Saviour, our Leader, our Teacher, our King, faith that leads us to love and obey, is necessary to our salvation into the kingdom of God. — *P.* We have thus in this one verse a pregnant summary of our Lord's preaching, the end of the preparatory period, the manifestation of God's kingdom, and the conditions of admission and acceptance. — *Canon Cook*.

II. The Call. — Vers. 16-20. 16. As he walked. The Saviour had *come down* (Luke 4: 31. John 4: 47, 51) from the high country of Galilee, and now made his permanent abode in the deep retreat of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum, “his own city” (Matt. 4: 13. Luke 4: 31), whence he could easily communicate, as well by land as by the lake, with many important towns, and in the event of any threatened persecution retire into a more secure region. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. He was probably on his way from Nazareth, from which place he had been driven away, to Capernaum. If he had already been at Capernaum he would not have waited till the sabbath before healing Peter's wife's mother (vers. 30, 31). — *P.* Sea of Galilee. So named from the province on its western side. It was also called the Sea of Tiberias, from a city built by Herod Antipas on the south-west shore, and named in honor of the Emperor Tiberius (John 6: 1; 21: 1). It is pear-shaped, the broad end being toward the north, the greatest width being six and three-quarter miles: it is twelve and a half miles long, and 165 feet deep. It is surrounded on all sides by hills, from 500 to nearly 2,000 feet high. Its waters are pure and sweet, and abound in fish. It is, according to Lieut. Lynch, 653 feet below the Mediterranean. Many populous towns once stood upon its shores, but they and their commerce are gone. Tiberias and Magdala are the only inhabited spots. — *G. W. Clark*. Simon. A contraction of Simeon, a Hebrew name which means *hearing*. He had previously been named Peter, *a rock* (John 1: 42), the name by which he was called after the disciples were constituted apostles. Andrew. A Greek word meaning *manly*. Whether he was older or younger than his brother Simon Peter, is not known. They had formerly lived in Bethsaida (John 1: 44); but had afterward gone to Capernaum to live (Luke 4: 31, 38). Casting a net into the

17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18. And straightway¹ they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19. ² And when he had gone a little further thence,

And Jesus said unto them, 17
Come ye after me, and I will
make you to become fishers
of men. And straightway 18
they left the nets, and followed
him. And going on a little 19
further, he saw James the

¹ Matt. 19: 27. Luke 5: 11. ² Matt. 4: 21.

sea; or, literally, according to the correct reading, *throwing about in the sea* (viz., a hand-net). It is one of Mark's vivid touches. The *about* is graphic in the original: it represents the fishermen throwing now on the one side of their boat, and now on the other. Hand-nets are exceedingly common in the East, and of various kinds. They differ from drag-nets, which are trailed along the bottom of the fishing-place. Hand-nets are let down and lifted up, and are more or less of a bag shape. And it more accords with the habits of the East to suppose that there would be but one net in operation at a time between the two fishermen. One of the two men would manage the boat, and take charge of the fishes caught, while the other was engaged in throwing the net and lifting it up. — *Morison*. For they were fishers. Of a humble calling, indeed; but still, in the exercise of it, the men were trained to habits which were, in many respects, well fitted to prepare them for higher duties. The successful use of the hand-net requires in the fishermen, says Dr. W. M. Thomson, "a keen eye, an active frame, and great skill in throwing. He must, too, be patient, watchful, wide awake, and prompt to seize the exact moment to throw." — *Morison*. We must beware of giving way to the common notion that there is any thing disgraceful in being poor, and in working with our own hands. — *Ryle*. Christ does not call idle men to work in his vineyard. — *Bib. Museum*.

17. And Jesus said unto them. This is but a brief account of what is related in full in Luke 5: 1-11, where their call is preceded by a wonderful catch of fish. It is worthy of note that this miracle, so full of meaning, was twice wrought by our Lord; both now, when he called them to their work, and at the last, when he was about to leave them (John 21: 6). And in both cases he would show by it how he could and would make their work successful. (See Ezek. 47: 10.) He who could make them from *fishermen* to become *fishers of men*, could make them catch men in their new work as easily and abundantly as now he could make them catch fish. — *Jacobus*. Come after me, as my disciples, and as my attendants and the proclaimers of my gospel. Observe how *gradually* the four had been called to their new work: (1) first (autumn of A. D. 26) they were disciples of the Baptist (John 1: 35); (2) then they were directed by him to the *Lamb of God* (John 1: 36), February, A. D. 29; (3) afterwards they were invited by our Lord to see where he dwelt (John 1: 39); (4) then they became witnesses of his first miracle (John 2: 2); they were his *disciples*, but continued to follow their occupation as fishermen; (5) now (spring, A. D. 28) they are enrolled amongst his attached followers, as his *constant attendants*, ministers, or evangelists, although they afterward fished sometimes, when near their homes (Luke 5: 1-11. John 21: 3). Their selection among the twelve apostles occurred afterward, the following summer (chap. 3: 14. Luke 6: 14-16). Thus their calling was threefold: (1) disciples, (2) constant attendants, (3) apostles. — *Cambridge Bible*. Fishers of men. Preachers of the gospel, winners of souls to Christ. They were to catch men in the net of Christ's kingdom. Their former secular calling was an emblem of their higher spiritual calling in object, methods, and success. This language shows that now they were not called merely as disciples, but as preachers, evangelists. — *G. W. Clark*.

18. Straightway. They went at once. Most souls are lost through indecision. — *National Teacher*. Forsook their nets. Not only for once, but as their permanent employment, and their means of subsistence. At the same time the words seem to suggest that the fishermen left their nets lying where they were, without waiting to deposit or secure them. This unhesitating response to the divine call, without regard to minor consequences, is presented elsewhere as a severe but equitable test of true devotion to the Master (Luke 9: 57-62). — *Alexander*. The forsaking consists not in the more or less that is forsaken, but in the spirit in which it is left. These apostles might have left little when they left their possessions, but they left much when they left their desires. — *Trench*. It is interesting to note the brotherliness of the brothers. They had worked together in their secular calling, and they were not divided in their attachment to Jesus. — *Morison*. Followed him. We follow Christ when we imitate his example, obey his words, walk in his footsteps toward heaven and God. — *P.*

19. Gone a little further. A little time has intervened, which Jesus has occupied in conversing with Simon and Andrew, of which the brief words of their call are an epitome. The "partners of Simon" have landed their load of fish, and are quietly mending their nets

he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20. And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21. ¹ And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22. ² And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. And 20 straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

And they go into Capernaum: 21 and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. And 22 they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. And straight- 23

¹ Matt. 4: 13. Luke 4: 31. ² Matt. 7: 28.

when Jesus approaches them. — *Rev. A. B. Rich.* James. Probably the elder of the two brothers. James is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Jacob*. He is usually called the *Greater* or *Elder* (to distinguish him from James the *Less*, the kinsman of Jesus and author of the book of James). He was beheaded by order of King Herod Agrippa (Acts 12 : 2), A. D. 44, and was the first martyr among the apostles. His apostolic labors seem not to have extended beyond Jerusalem and Judea. — *Schaff's Bible Dictionary.* Zebedee. (Jehovah's gift.) Husband of Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19 : 25), who ministered to the Lord (Matt. 27 : 56), though he himself is not mentioned among the disciples. The mention of hired servants (v. 20), of the two vessels employed (Luke 5 : 7), and the subsequent allusion to St. John's acquaintance with a person in so high a position as the high priest (John 18 : 15), seem to indicate that Zebedee, if not a wealthy man, was at any rate of some position at Capernaum. — *Cambridge Bible.* John. *The grace of God.* The disciple whom Jesus loved. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, the Epistle General of John, and the Book of Revelation. Among the first called by Jesus to be his disciples, he followed him faithfully through a long life. — *Hurlbut.* He made Ephesus the centre of his apostolic labors, and had given general supervision over the churches of Asia Minor, beginning A. D. 64. In A. D. 95 he was banished to Patmos, and died about the close of the century, aged nearly a hundred years. — *Schaff.* Mending their nets. Broken by the great draught of fishes (Luke 5 : 6).

20. They left their father. The call of God is above all earthly demands (Matt. 10 : 37). But we are to note that they did not leave their father unprovided for; and to show this may have been the reason why hired servants are mentioned. God's call does not bid us to let our parents suffer, but forbids it (Mark 7 : 10-13). — *P.*

III. Teaching with Authority. — Vers. 21, 22. 21. Capernaum. (Town of Nahum.) Situated on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee; but its exact site is now uncertain. It was quite a large city (*Strong's Cyclopadia*), containing, according to *Stout's Chronological Chart*, 30,000 inhabitants at the time of Christ. Sabbath day. Our Saturday, their sabbath. Jesus was accustomed to spend the sabbath religiously. Synagogue. (*Congregation*, the same as our word *church*.) The Jewish place of worship, much like our Christian churches, but modelled after the type of the tabernacle. — *Whedon.* Taught. It was the custom in the synagogue to invite members of the congregation or visitors of note to make remarks. It is obvious that in the synagogues of Palestine was the safety-valve, the open sphere, the golden opportunity for any fresh teaching to arise. — *A. P. Stanley.*

22. Doctrine. Teaching: what he taught, and the manner of teaching. For he taught them as one that had authority. This cannot refer to a dogmatical, authoritative manner, as to which the scribes surpassed all others; but he taught them, not as an expounder, but with the original authority belonging to the author of the law expounded. — *Alexander.* He taught with the authority of one who knows all the facts and all their bearings. Being God he *knew* all about heaven and hell and the way there, all about God and the truths he had revealed to the Jews, and all his plans and purposes for his kingdom in the future. It was this perfect knowledge that gave him the authority with which he spoke, and which gives superiority to the Bible over all philosophical systems and attempts at religious systems. — *P.* And not as the scribes. The scribes were the learned men of the Jewish nation, the men who had to do with *letters*. Almost all the writing that was required in the nation would be done by them; most of the reading too. The transcribing of the scriptures would devolve on them. Hence the interpretation of the Law and the Prophets, in the synagogues, would devolve chiefly on them, and the people

23. ¹ And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24. Saying, Let us alone; ² what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

way there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

¹ Luke 4: 33. ² Matt. 8: 29.

would to a large degree be dependent on their instructions. They would vary greatly, like other men, in ability, character, and qualifications. They would be skillful in splitting hairs to infinity, and they would be proud of their ability to lead their hearers through the endless mazes of the imaginations of preceding rabbis,—imaginations that ended in nothing, or in something that was actually worse than nothing. But they would have no power, or almost none, to move the conscience toward true goodness, or to stir the love of the heart toward God and toward men. They might speak, indeed, with positiveness enough, but it would not be with moral power. They might assert with dictatorial self-sufficiency; but it would not be with “demonstration of the spirit,” demonstration flashing in conviction even upon reluctant and hard-winking souls.—*Morison.*

IV. **The Power of Christ over the Powers of Darkness and Sin.**—Vers. 23-36.
23. **And there was in their synagogue.** As part of the audience on that day.—The piteous outcry of the demoniac disturbs the assembly.—*Godwin.* How could such a man be found in a synagogue? Perhaps his malady had not broken out before as it did at this moment. Luke says literally *a man who had a spirit (an afflatus) of an unclean devil.*—*Godet.* **A man with an unclean spirit.** Or, more literally, *a man “in” an unclean spirit,* that is, a man under the influence of an unclean spirit; just as we say, *a man “in” drink,* or, more pleasantly, *a man “in” love.* For the time being the man is absorbed, as it were, in love or in drink. So the demoniac was absorbed, as it were, *into* the demon, and was completely under its power, or, as we may say, *within* its power.—There is manifestly a spiritual side of things, the counterpart of that material side that is open to our apperception through our senses. It is entirely arbitrary, and a mere wilful imagination, to suppose that in this spiritual side of things there is no other spiritual element except what is human. The universe is large. Worlds are linked to worlds. Evil and good are strangely commingled. God is everywhere, and he is a spirit. There is therefore some other spiritism than what is human; and, as regards the sphere of creation, we may be sure that it is not a mere spiritual wilderness or waste or vacuum round about man. There are hosts of spirits at once hierarchically ascending and contrariwise descending. Influences from both directions press in upon men.—*Morison.* **An unclean spirit.** These spirits are called unclean because they are impure, unholy, and produce such effects in those whom they possess. Demoniac possession is “the caricature of inspiration.” We know *who* inspires by the effects produced.—*P.* See *Les. XI. of this quarter.* **He cried out.** The unclean spirit. He had such control of the man that he spoke through him, using his organs of speech. The personality of the demon is distinctly recognized. Neither a disease nor a myth could thus cry out.—*G. W. Clark.*

24. **Let us alone.** Rather, *hah*, an interjection of surprise and displeasure. It is omitted in some of the best ancient manuscripts.—*G. W. Clark.* It is the cry like that of the criminal, who, when suddenly apprehended by the police, cries out, “Loose me!”—*Godet.* **What have we to do with thee?** Or rather, *What hast thou to do with us?* Very literally, *What to us and to thee?* It is a peculiar idiomatic expression, meaning *What is there in common to us and to thee?* As here applied it is deprecatory, and means, *Why dost thou interfere with us?* The Saviour had not, so far as appears, been formally interfering by any specific action; but his very presence on the scene was felt to be interference. There emanated from him, round about, an influence that went in upon men blissfully, counter-working all evil influences. The unclean spirit felt the power, and resented it as an interference,—an interference, not with itself in particular, but with the entire circle of kindred spirits. “What hast thou to do with us?”—*Morison.* **Art thou come to destroy us?** Note the *us*.—*Camest thou to destroy “us”?* *Is it the intent of thy mission to put down all demonic power?* Note the word *destroy.* It has no reference to the annihilation of being.—*Morison.* **I know thee.** Not as an acquaintance, but by fame and report.—*Alexander.* Earth has not recognized her King, has not yet seen him through his disguise; but heaven and hell alike bear witness unto him.—*Trench.* **The Holy One of God.** Such is Christ, both morally and officially.—This term expresses the character in which this being recognized his deadly enemy.—*Godet.* Christ is the exact opposite of the unclean spirits, being holy, and producing holiness in others.

25. And Jesus ¹ rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26. And when the unclean spirit ² had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

¹ Ver. 34. ² Ch. 9: 20.

25. And Jesus rebuked. The original word is very peculiar, and strictly means *rated*. Our Saviour *chid* the evil spirit. He never on any occasion gave any quarter to any thing demonic. **Hold thy peace.** The word translated *Hold thy peace* is exceedingly graphic, *Be muzzled*. It is a word for a beast. — *Morison*. He silences the devils, even when they spake the truth, lest he should seem to approve of witnesses who were liars by nature. — *Novarinus*. It was to bring the truth itself into suspicion and discredit, when it was borne witness to by the spirit of lies. — *Trench*. **Come out of him.** Two distinct personalities are here recognized. The demon is treated as a person as much as the man. The one was just as much a disease or a principle as the other, no more, and no less. — *Bible Union Notes*.

26. Had torn him. *Convulsed* him, but not in such a manner as to do him injury, for Luke says (4: 35), "he came out of him, and hurt him not." Luke also says, "the devil had thrown him in the midst." Such paroxysms in connection with casting out demons showed their malignant and degraded nature (9: 26), and only made the miracle the more impressive. — *Bible Union Notes*. So it is ever apt to be when devils are cast out of men. Satan will not easily leave his prey. So was it when the Israelites were being delivered from slavery in Egypt: their bondage for a time was made worse. So evil habits show unusual power when we try to cast them off. So often matters seem worse than ever just before a revival of religion. — *P*. **Cried with a loud voice.** It might seem as though the evil spirit was not altogether and at once obedient to the word of Christ, that it was not altogether a word of power, since he bade him to hold his peace, and yet in the next verse it is said that "*he cried with a loud voice*," as he was leaving the man (*cf.* Acts 8: 7). But in truth he was obedient to this command of silence: he did not *speak* any more, and that was the thing which our Lord meant to forbid. This cry was nothing but an inarticulate cry of rage and pain. — *Trench*.

27. **Amazed . . . questioned.** Each turned to his neighbor, in astonishment, to ask his opinion, *Saying, What is this? New teaching with authority! And he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey him!* Such is, apparently, the correct reading and rendering of the abrupt remarks which the astonished people made to one another. — *Morison*. Doctrine is, as elsewhere, the teaching taken as a whole, including manner as well as substance. — *Ellicott*. **With authority.** The authority with which he taught found its guaranty in the authority backed by power with which he forced the devils themselves to render obedience. Christ's cures differed from the pretences of the exorcists, just as his teaching did from that of the scribes. — *Godet*.

28. His fame. Literally, *the report of him*. Spread abroad. Flew, as it were, on the wings of the wind, into all the surrounding district of Galilee. — *Morison*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Galilee, see *Sinai and Palestine*, 375-377. On fishing, see *Land and Book*, 2: 79-81. On synagogues, *Bible Educator*, 2: 119. On vers. 23-28, see *Trench*, *Dean Howson*, and *George MacDonald on Miracles*, *Godet on Luke*, *Morison on Mark*, *J. W. Alexander's Discourses on Faith*, "The Nature of Faith," ver. 15. For illustrations of repentance, see *Foster's Cyclopædia of Illustrations*, 1: 4962-4982.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The gospel good news. A tragedy of the old Greek poet Æschylus relates that when the Greek king Agamemnon sailed for Troy with the other Greeks, he arranged to

convey quick intelligence of the capture of the city to his wife Clytemnestra, by means of a chain of signal-fires. Ten long years passed, during all which Clytemnestra's watchman kept vigil on her palace-roof. But at last Troy fell, and the beacon-light flashed from mountain-top to mountain-top with the good news, to all Greeks, of victory. — *S. S. Times*. So should each of us be as one of these mountain beacon-lights, telling all that Jesus has gained the victory over sin and Satan for us.

II. Repent and believe. Repentance without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks. — *Palmer*.

It reminds me of what I once saw take place at a retreat for imbeciles. It is the custom there, after the patients have been in residence a certain time, to put them to a kind of test to see whether they are fit to leave the asylum, or not. They are taken to a trough full of water, with a small pipe continually running into it and supplying it. They are given a ladle, and told to empty it. Those who have not regained their senses keep ladling away, while the water runs in as fast as they ladle out; but those who are not idiots stop the tap. — *Sir Wilfred Lawson*.

III. Believe. The Harvard Chinese professor's definition of a Christian, — a Chinaman converted: "That young man believes this book [the Bible], oh, very, *very much!*" — *The Advance*.

IV. Fishers of men. When Francis Xavier was in Rome, preparing to go on his great mission to the heathen, he was heard by his friend Rodriguez uttering in his sleep the words, "Yet more, O my God, yet more!" In his dreams there had come to him a vision of his future career: of his sufferings, weariness, hunger, thirst, the storms to be battled, and the fiercer storms of heathen rage, the continents to be travelled, the rivers and seas to be crossed, dangers and death on every hand. But along with these, he saw the nations that he would bring to Christ, islands, continents, empires, that would by his voice hear the gospel of the kingdom; and he exclaimed, *Yet more, O my God, yet more!* More toil, more suffering, and more souls brought into eternal life. See *H. C. Fish's Primitive Piety*, p. 162; *Kip's Conflicts of Christianity*, p. 185.

V. Teaching with authority. Whoever *knows* any subject can teach it with *authority*. Some men are authority on science, some on literature, some on medicine, because they know more about these subjects than others do. But Christ is the only one who has ever been into the other world, and returned to this; and therefore he is *authority* upon the future life. He *knows* the final result of sin, and the glory of heaven, and the way to it. And because he is *divine*, and knows all things, there can be no mistake about what he says: he speaks with perfect authority. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 14. Wherever we are, we should by word and life preach the gospel of the kingdom.
2. Ver. 15. There never was so much reason to repent as now, when Christ reveals the evil of sin and the blessings of repentance, and gives us his aid in forsaking our sins.
3. Vers. 16, 17. We should watch opportunities for doing good. While Jesus was walking he called the four. — *Clark*.
4. Jesus honored labor by calling his first ministers from the scenes of toil. — *Clark*.
5. Faithfulness in daily labor prepares us for Christ's spiritual work.
6. Therefore God calls busy people to serve him. None can do it better.
7. We should learn from fishermen to be patient, skilful, to adapt ourselves to times and seasons, and to use the proper attractions to draw men to Christ.
8. Ver. 21. The true way to keep the sabbath is to follow Christ to church, to keep the sabbath religiously as well as restfully, — restfully because religiously.
9. Ver. 22. We should have such an experience of religion that we may be able to speak to men with authority.
10. We can trust Christ perfectly, because all he says is with the authority of one who knows.
11. Vers. 24-26. It is safe to follow one who has power over the principalities and powers of evil.
12. Ver. 27. Christ's wonderful deeds prove the truth of his wonderful words.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The one subject into which the various portions of this lesson may fit as the ribs of a ship into a keel, is THE CALL OF CHRIST TO FOLLOW HIM. (1) In the first two verses is a brief description of the *gospel of the kingdom to which we are called*, with the conditions of entering it, *faith and repentance*. (2) *The call* (vers. 16-20). (3) *The teaching of Him who*

calls (vers. 21, 22), with the *authority* of one who knows, and who is therefore trustworthy, with Christ's *example* of how to keep the sabbath. (4) The last part of the lesson (vers. 23-28) shows the *power* of Him who calls, over the enemy, and that therefore it is safe to join his cause, and success over all evil is assured.

LESSON III. — JANUARY 15.

POWER TO HEAL. — MARK I : 29-45.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I am the Lord that healeth thee.* — EXOD. 15 : 26.

TIME. — April-June, A. D. 28. The healing of Peter's wife's mother occurred immediately after the last lesson, the same sabbath on which Jesus' teaching in the synagogue was interrupted by the demoniac. After this he began his first missionary tour of Galilee. The healing of the leper was toward the latter part of this tour, in May or June.

PLACE. — Capernaum, and the towns and cities of Galilee. This was Jesus' FIRST MISSIONARY CIRCUIT of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (15). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (3). Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — The *healing of Peter's wife's mother* and others (vers. 29-34) is recorded also in Matt. 8 : 14-17, and Luke 4 : 38-41. The *first circuit* of Galilee (vers. 35-39), also in Luke 4 : 42-44, followed by Matt. 4 : 23-25. The *healing of the leper* (vers. 40-45), also in Matt. 8 : 2-4, and Luke 5 : 12-16.

INTRODUCTION.

The sabbath service in the synagogue had been interrupted by the outcry of the demoniac while Jesus was preaching. After his cure, and the close of the public services, Jesus with his four disciples retires to the modest home of Peter and Andrew, where he works a miracle, the beginning of a series which leads to the height of his fame and popularity and success throughout Galilee.

29. ¹ And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

And straightway, when ²⁹ they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's wife's mother ³⁰ lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of

¹ Matt. 8 : 14. Luke 4 : 38.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Healing of Peter's Wife's Mother. — Vers. 29-31. 29. And forthwith. The same word as *immediately* in ver. 28. Immediately after the interruption by the demoniac and his cure (see last lesson), in the synagogue of Capernaum. They. Jesus and his four disciples. House of Simon (Peter) and Andrew his brother (see Lesson II, ver. 16). These, though formerly of Bethsaida, were now living in Capernaum.

30. Simon's wife's mother. For St. Paul's allusion to Peter as a *married man*, see 1 Cor. 9 : 5. She seems to have travelled with him. Her (most improbable) traditional name was Concordia or Perpetua. "St. Peter, the apostle of Christ, who was himself a married man" (*Marriage Service*). — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. Sick of a fever. Malarious fevers of a malignant type are common in the vicinity of Capernaum. In the very imperfect medical language of that day, fevers were simply divided into little and great fevers. Luke, who was a physician, characterizes this as a "great fever." That she was entirely prostrated by it, is evident by the language here, "laid and sick of a fever." — *Abbott*. The quantity of marshy land in the neighborhood, especially at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, has made fever of a very malignant type at times the characteristic of the locality. — *Geikie*. Anon. This is our Evangelist's favorite "straightway," occurring 10 or 11 times in this first chapter. — *Morison*. They tell him of her. They did as we should do, bring all our friends to Jesus, and go to him with our needs and dangers.

31. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32. ¹And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34. And he healed many that were sick of divers

her: and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast

¹ Matt. 8: 16. Luke 4: 40.

31. **He came.** Observe all the graphic touches in this verse: the Lord (1) *went to the sufferer*, (2) *took her by the hand*, (3) *lifted her up*, and (4) *the fever, rebuked by the Lord of life* (Luke 4: 39), *left her*, and (5) she began to *minister unto them*. — *Cambridge Bible*. Took her by the hand, and lifted her up. Or, as we should say, *assisted her up*. The perfect self-possession and calm confidence of our Lord are beautifully indicated. There was no hesitancy on the one hand, and no bustle on the other. He simply put himself in connection with the patient, and the matter was done. — *Morison*. The fever left her. He willed, and it was done. This is the fiat of Omnipotence. The curative virtue is in Christ's will, not in instrumentalities. — *Genius of the Gospel*. She ministered unto them. Such a fever invariably leaves the patient weak. The period of convalescence is always long and trying, often full of danger. The fact that she ministered to them, i.e., served in the ordinary duties of the household, shows that Christ in healing the disease also imparted health and strength, and it demonstrates the miraculous character of the cure. — *Abbott*. We may see in this a lively emblem of Christ's dealings with sin-sick souls. He not only gives forgiveness, he gives renewing grace besides. Those whom he justifies, he also sanctifies. He grants free forgiveness for the past: he also grants strength to minister to him for the time to come. — *Ryle*.

II. **The Healing of Multitudes Sabbath Evening.** — Vers. 32-34. 32. **At even.** Evening. When the sun did set; i.e., the close of the sabbath, which, among the Jews, ended with the setting sun. There are two reasons why the time should be thus specified. (1) It was natural that the sick should be brought in the cool of the evening, rather than in the scorching heat of the afternoon. (2) It was the sabbath, and the feeling which made the Pharisees question the lawfulness of a man's carrying the bed on which he had been lying (John 5: 10) on the sabbath, would probably have deterred the friends of the sick from bringing them as long as it lasted. — *Ellicott*. (3) By this time the news of Christ's miraculous power would have had time to spread over the city. — *Alexander*. All that were diseased. The term *diseased*, in its current modern acceptation, is perhaps a trifle too strong to represent the import of the original expression; but when looked at etymologically, *dis-eased*, that is, *sundered from ease, or ill at ease*, and thus *unwell*, it is all that could be desired. — *Morison*. Possessed with devils. With demons or evil spirits. It is no doubt a correct enough description; but the word *devil or devils* is never used in the original, when demoniacs are spoken of. It is always the word *demon or demons*, or the generic term *spirit or spirits*. — *Morison*. On demoniacs (see Lesson II., ver. 23, and XI., ver. 2). Here, too, was combined the case of demoniacal possession, so strongly and typically expressive of moral and spiritual disease, with that of ordinary sickness; as if the great Physician were willing to exhibit the power of his healing touch, both on souls and bodies, and to shadow forth that perfect restoration of "body, soul, and spirit" (1 Thess. 5: 23), hereafter to take place, through the grace and efficacy of the great Atonement. (Ps. 145: 14-21.) — *C. C. Bartholomew*.

33. **All the city.** The effect was to rouse and gather the entire population of the city, to obtain healing for themselves or friends, or at least to see and hear the new teacher. — *Alexander*. At the door, of Peter's house where Jesus was.

34. **He healed many.** Not that some were left unhealed, but that he healed them all (Matt. 8: 16), and those whom he thus healed were many. — *Alexander*. Disease is the result, the outgrowth, the representative, of sin; and Christ's healing of the maladies of the body is an exhibition of his power and willingness to heal the maladies of the soul. — *Dean Howson*. Matthew says (8: 17) that here was fulfilled the prophecy "which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Isa. 53: 4, 5). How did he bear the infirmities of the sick? Not literally. He removed them from others, but did not become diseased himself. Neither in removing sins from others does he become stricken with sin himself (comp. John 1: 29, with Heb. 4: 14).

diseases, and cast out many devils; and ¹suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

35. And ²in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

out many devils: and he suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

And in the morning, a great ³⁵while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there

¹ Ch. 3: 12. Luke 4: 41. See Acts 16, 17, 18. ² Luke 4: 42.

15). But he did not merely heal the sick: he truly bore their sicknesses, not in his body, but in his heart. — *Abbott*. For that which is the law of all true helping, namely, that the burden which you would lift, you must yourself stoop to and come under (Gal. 6: 2), the grief which you would console, you must yourself feel with, — a law which we witness to as often as we use the words "sympathy" and "compassion," — was, of course, eminently true in Him upon whom the help of all was laid. Not in this single aspect of his life, namely, that he was a healer of sicknesses, were these words of the prophet fulfilled; but rather in the life itself, which brought him in contact with these sicknesses and these discords of man's inner being, every one of which as a real consequence of sin, and as being at every moment contemplated by him as such, did press with a living pang into the holy soul of the Lord. Not so much the healing of these sicknesses was Christ's bearing of them; but his burden was, that there were these sicknesses to heal. He "*bore*" them, inasmuch as he bore the mortal suffering life, in which alone he could bring them to an end, and at length swallow up death in victory. — *Trench*.

(1) Christ came to undo the evil which Satan had done, to counteract all the works of the Devil. (2) Diseases of the body are the result of the diseases of the soul, and must be cured. (3) Christ proved that he could heal the soul of sin, by healing the body from disease. (4) He proved that he could heal all the evils of mankind. His healings foreshadowed the effect of his religion upon the world. He makes the dead in sin to be alive, and reveals the resurrection and the life. He opens the eyes of the spiritually blind: he is the light of the world. He casts out the devils of sin, from the heart and from the community. He calms the tempest of sorrow with his "*Peace, be still.*" He delivers the soul from all its imperfections. — *P*. **Suffered not the devils (demons) to speak.** It will not do to have those who are wicked and false at heart to bear witness even to the truth, lest men believe it to be a lie. See Lesson II., ver. 25. **Because they knew him.** They were ready to speak *because* they knew his nature and work. The mere belief of the facts and doctrines of Christianity will never save our souls. "The devils believe, and tremble." Let us take heed that ours is a faith of the *heart* as well as of the head. "The life of Christianity," says Luther, "consists in possessive pronouns." It is one thing to say, *Christ is a Saviour*: it is quite another to say, *Christ is my Saviour and my Lord*. The devil can say the first: the true Christian alone can say the second. — *Ryle*.

III. **Christ's Season of Solitary Prayer.** — Vers. 35-37. 35. In the morning. Another graphic touch of the Evangelist. He brings the scene before our eyes. The previous day had been a long day of conflict with and victory over the kingdom of sin and death. He now retires to refresh himself in the heaven of prayer, in communion with his Father. He prepares himself in the desert for a second great mission of love, this time accompanied by his first four disciples. — *Maclear*. **A great while before day.** The expression brings into view a length of time which is not indicated in the original, and might with difficulty be harmonized with Luke 4:42. *Before daylight* would be better. Literally, *while it was exceedingly nocturnal*, i.e., *while the darkness of the night was still very great.* — *Morison*. **Solitary place.** Not merely solitary, for a garden might be solitary, but *desert, desolate*, as the word in all other places is rendered. — *Morison*. "A remarkable feature of the lake of Gennesaret was that it was closely surrounded with desert solitudes. These 'desert places' thus close at hand on the tablelands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, gave opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer. 'Rising up early in the morning while it was yet dark,' or 'passing over to the other side in a boat,' he sought these solitudes, sometimes alone, sometimes with his disciples. The lake in this double aspect is thus a reflex of that union of energy and rest, of active labor and deep devotion, which is the essence of Christianity, as it was of the life of Him in whom that union was first taught and shown. — *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 378, 379. **And there prayed.** The original word does not simply denote *asking*. Prayer, says Petter, is a holy conference with God. — *Morison*. Prayer gave him power. The gate to heaven is prayer. No man is strong enough, or spiritual enough, to be able to neglect it. By daily food the body lives and is able to perform its functions. By daily prayer the soul lives, and only by prayer performs its work of grace. — *Rev. J. H. Vincent, D.D.*

36. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38. And he said unto them, ¹Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for ²therefore came I forth.

39. ³And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40. ⁴And there came a leper to him, beseeching

prayed. And Simon and they ³⁶ that were with him followed after him; and they found him, ³⁷ and say unto him, All are seeking thee. And he saith unto ³⁸ them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth. And he ³⁹ went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out devils.

And there cometh to him a ⁴⁰ leper, beseeching him, and

¹ Luke 4:43. ² Isa. 61:1. John 16:28; 17:4. ³ Matt. 4:23. Luke 4:44. ⁴ Matt. 8:2. Luke 5:12.

36. And Simon . . . followed after him. When they awoke in the morning, and found him gone, they seem to have got alarmed lest he should have left them, betaking himself to some other sphere of labor. So, too, the inhabitants of the little city in general seem to have felt. Hence the haste and eagerness of Simon and his companions (Andrew, James, and John, see ver. 29), — as indicated by the strong verb employed: they *pursued him*, as if *he were fleeing from them*. Peter was the leader of the pursuing party, — thus giving early indication of the impulsive ardor of his nature. — *Morison*.

37. And they found him. Search and uncertainty is implied, since he had retired to an unfrequented spot. — *Schaff*. They said unto him. Peter said this to induce him to return, and the crowd besought him to stay. The will of the multitude did not govern him, as they supposed, hence the reply in the next verse. — *Schaff*. All seek thee. That is, though indefinitely, *all the people (in Capernaum)*. The people in general had no sooner risen in the morning than they thought of the wonderful preacher and healer and demon-exPELLER (Luke 4:42). They wanted still to hear more, and to see more; and hence they came, one after another, to the house where he had been lodging, in quest of him. The emphasis is on the word *seek*. — *Morison*.

IV. The First Missionary Tour of Galilee. — Vers. 38, 39. 38. He said . . . Let us go into the next towns. Spoken to the disciples, who are invited to go with him. The answer to the multitude is given by Luke (4:43): "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also." — *Schaff*. Towns. The word so translated (*κωμοπόλει*) means *village cities, country towns*, imperfectly enclosed towns, and unenclosed villages. Josephus says, concerning the two Galilees, Upper and Lower, "The cities lie thick; and the multitude of villages are everywhere full of people, in consequence of the richness of the soil, so that the very least of them contains above 15,000 inhabitants" (*War*, 3:3, 2). — *Morison*. That I may preach there also. Not to work miracles, but to preach; though he did both (ver. 39). The crowd gathered because of the works he performed; but his great object was to teach (*Schaff*), and not in one place only, but far and wide. Therefore came I forth. Not, I came forth from the city — for his purpose in that had been retirement and prayer; but, I came forth from the Father (John 16:28). His mission is here indicated; viz., to herald the glad tidings of divine love to all the world, a mission which he leaves to his followers to complete (John 17:18). — *Abbott*.

39. Throughout all Galilee. Throughout the whole region, as well as the nearest towns (ver. 38. Matt. 4:23). Josephus says that in his day "there were 240 towns and villages in Galilee" (*Life*, § 45). Galilee, the northernmost province of Judea, was the scene of Christ's most abundant labors; all the apostles except Judas Iscariot were Galileans; its inhabitants were simple-minded, and comparatively free from the control of the priestly class, which ruled in Judea, and from the bigotry and intolerance of the Judeans. Preached. The form of Jesus' preaching was essentially Jewish. It was concise, epigrammatic, oracular, so pointed as to stick in the mind like an arrow. It swarmed with figures of speech. He thought in images, pictures. The qualities of the preacher were (1) authority; (2) boldness; (3) power; (4) graciousness. — *Stalker's Life of Our Lord*. Cast out devils. Referred to again and again, as the most remarkable exhibition of his power, being utterly incurable and unmanageable by men; and as the best type of his whole work on earth, casting out all evil, all that mars this world, and fitting the world for the kingdom of heaven. — *P*.

V. Healing of the Leper. — Vers. 40-45. 40. There came. Some time during this tour of Galilee. A leper. One infected with the leprosy (*lepra vulgaris*), the most dreadful of all the diseases to which the Jews were subject. — *Mead*. Luke says, *A man full of leprosy* (Luke 5:12). This disease is nothing short of a foul decay, arising from the total corruption of the blood. It was a living death, as indicated by bare head, rent

him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou

clothes, and covered lip. In the middle ages, a man seized with leprosy was "clothed in a shroud, and the masses of the dead sung over him." In its horrible repulsiveness it is the gospel type of sin. — *Farrar*. Leprosy signifies smiting, because supposed to be a direct visitation of Heaven. It began with little specks on the eyelids and on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes, were attacked in turn, till at last consumption or dropsy brought welcome death. The dread of infection kept men aloof from the sufferer; and the law proscribed him as above all men unclean. The disease was hereditary to the fourth generation. — *Geikie*. The leprosy. From the statistics collected by the Dermatological Society it appears that there are between fifty and one hundred lepers in the United States at present. — *Medical Record, February, 1881*. We find that nearly everywhere the disease is most common on the seashore, and that, when it spreads inland, it generally occurs on the shores of lakes or along the course of large rivers. — *J. Hutchinson, F. R. S., in Medical Press. Is the leprosy contagious?* A review of the evidence led the speaker to the conclusion that this disease was not contagious by ordinary contact; but it may be transmitted by the blood and secretions. A recent writer, Dr. Bross, a Jesuit missionary attached to the lazaretto at Trinidad, takes the ground that the disease in some way or other is transmissible. It is a well-established fact that when leprosy has once gained for itself a foothold in any locality, it is apt to remain there and spread. The case of the Sandwich Islands illustrates the danger. Forty years ago the disease did not exist there: now one-tenth of the inhabitants are lepers. — *Dr. H. S. Piffard of New York in Medical Record, February, 1881*. Being the worst form of disease, leprosy was fixed upon by God to be the *special type of sin*; and the injunctions regarding it had reference to its typical character. It was accompanied by the emblems of death. (Lev. 13:45, comp. with Num. 6:9. Ezek. 24:17.) It involved ceremonial uncleanness (see Num. 19:13. Ezek. 45:25); and the exclusion of the leper from the congregation (Lev. 13:44-46. Num. 5:1-3; 12:14, 15. 2 Chron. 24:19-21) strikingly typified the separation of the sinner from God's presence. — *Eugene Stock*. Leprosy was the emblem of sin, — hereditary, contagious, ever tending to increase, and incurable except by the power of God. — *A. Thomson*. A shame and disgrace, rendering one alone in the world, deforming, unclean. — *Howson*. Thus sin affects the soul, rendering it unclean, separating it from God, producing spiritual death; unfitting it forever for heaven and the company of the holy, and insuring its eternal banishment, as polluted and abominable. Some, as they look on infancy, reject with horror the thought that sin exists within. But so might any one say, who looked upon the beautiful babe in the arms of a leprous mother. But time brings forth the fearful malady. New-born babes of leprous parents are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any; but by and by its presence and workings become visible in some of the signs described in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus. — *Land and Book, 11:519*. And so the leprosy of sin manifests itself in every human character as it comes forth from infancy. — *Bible Union Notes*. **Kneeling down.** Not an act of worship, but a gesture of entreaty. If thou wilt, thou canst. If thou art willing, thou art able. The leper had faith in the miraculous power of Jesus, but had a doubt about his willingness to exercise it on such an object as him, on one so unclean. — *G. W. Clark*. Or, whether it would come within the scope of Christ's mission. — *Morison*. Here was (1) a thorough consciousness of his own misery and helplessness; (2) he knew it was not too bad for Christ's power. It has been well said that the language of faith always is, not *if thou canst*, but *if thou wilt*. He is willing to leave the whole matter in Christ's hands. (3) Let us pause on this little word *IF*. "If" embodies in itself both fear and hope in varying proportions. "If" implies doubt; and faith, in its earlier stages, almost always involves doubt; but, when the soul can use "if," it has made great progress in faith. — *Dean Howson*. **Cleanse me.** He felt the *impurity* of his disease, not merely ceremonial, but actual, — as we should feel the impurity of sin, and pray not merely, *forgive*, but *cleanse*.

41. Moved with compassion. An exceedingly fine translation. — *Morison*. Jesus felt for the leper what he and his Father feel for all sinners, an unutterable compassion and

42. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44. And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things¹ which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

made clean. And straight-⁴² way the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. And he strictly charged⁴³ him, and straightway sent him out, and saith unto him, See⁴⁴ thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he⁴⁵

¹ Lev. 14: 3, 4, 10. Luke 5: 14.

love. Jesus was the expression of God's heart toward men. Put forth his hand, and touched him. The Evangelist pictures the act, and you see it. The Saviour did not fear contamination from contact with the leper; and surely, if it was competent to the priest, in administering ceremonial purification, to touch the healed patient (see Lev. 14), much more was it competent to our Lord, and a becoming thing, when imparting real purification, to touch lovingly and sympathetically the patient whom it was his pleasure to heal. He was, as Hegendorphinus says, *the Lord of the Law*. The touch would be an optical indication and demonstration of the actual transit of healing virtue from the curer to the cured. — *Morison*. Jesus was purity itself. He purified, but contracted no uncleanness. — *Bible Union Notes*. So we are safe in coming in contact with sin, when it is to cure and help, and only then. — *P*. I will; be thou clean (*cleansed*). What is given here so forcibly in five words is given by the original Greek in two. — *Howson*. The curative power of earthly physicians is in the fitness of the means they employ. The curative virtue of Christ is *in his will*, and not in instrumentalities. There was almightiness in his will. Moreover he gives effectiveness to all instrumentality. Let us look to *his WILL* as the mainspring and nerve of the universe, the rule of our duty, and the only hope of sinners. — *Genius of the Gospel*. He said "I will." That was blasphemy if Jesus was not God. — *Cummings*.

42. Immediately. The cure was instantaneous and complete, showing that it was the result not of human but divine power. The leprosy departed. The cause of his uncleanness; and then, as the result, he was *cleansed*. So Jesus cleanses the sinner by healing the seat of the disease. — *G. W. Clark*.

43. Straitly. Strictly, sternly. Charged him. The Saviour spoke to the man peremptorily, and with a kind of unmistakable sternness in his tone. The man would doubtless need to be thus addressed. Not unlikely he would be far too demonstrative in his gratitude, and going beyond bounds at once in his words and in his actions: perhaps, forgetting himself, and losing sight of the fact that he was still ceremonially unclean, have prostrated himself, and clasped the feet of our Lord, or the persons around him. — *Morison*.

44. Say nothing to any man. This charge was not absolute and permanent; which was not only needless (for the miracle was public), but impossible. The order of the sentence implies, Remain silent till thou hast gone, etc. — *Alexander*. What was the intention of Jesus? The cure having been public, he could not prevent the report of it being spread abroad. (1) He wanted to do all in his power to diminish its fame. — *Godet*. To show the unostentatiousness of Christ in all his doings. — *Thomas*. (2) Delay not, lest, the report having reached the priests first, they would not give an unbiased testimony as to the fact of the cure. (3) Because the reception of special mercy from Heaven requires solitude for nursing impressions into virtuous principles. — *Thomas*. (4) There was a tendency to attach too much importance to the merely physical element of the work in which he was engaged. The far more important moral and spiritual elements were scarcely at all apprehended. — *Morison*. Excitement, moreover, was unfavorable to the great work of Jesus. He needed a thoughtful calm in the mind for lasting effects. — *Griekie*. (5) The Saviour's fame as an exorcist and healer had already got wind enough, and more than enough. It was in danger of blowing into a perfect hurricane of popularity. A check was therefore needed. Very likely would they begin to weary waiting for the tide of events. They would seek to precipitate results. *Was not this the long-looked-for Deliverer? Is he not the true Messiah? Should we not have him instantly enthroned?* (John 6: 15.) *If we had him but once crowned, he would put all things to rights in the nation and in all other nations too! The sooner, surely, the better!* — *Morison*. Show thyself to the priest. At Jerusalem. — *Morison*. Those things which Moses commanded. Viz., (1) two birds, "alive and clean" (Lev. 14: 4); (2) cedar wood, (3) scarlet, and (4) hyssop; this was for the preliminary ceremony (Lev. 14: 4-7). On the eighth day further offerings were to be made, — (1) two he-lambs without blemish, (2) one ewe-lamb, (3) three tenth deals of fine

45. ¹But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: ²and they came to him from every quarter.

went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

¹ Luke 5: 15. ² Chap. 2: 13.

flour, (4) one log of oil. If the leper was poor, he was permitted to offer one lamb and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, with one tenth deal of fine flour. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. For a testimony unto them. (1) In order that the officiating priest, and the other officials who are associated with him, may learn from them the facts that are transpiring in Galilee. These facts have an important bearing upon the fullness of the time, and the fulfilment of the Scriptures. (2) The testimony was concerning Jesus himself, that he kept the law. During his earthly career Jesus never released his people from the obligation to obey the prescriptions of the law. And it is an error to regard him as having, under certain circumstances, set aside the law of the sabbath, so far as he himself was concerned. He only transgressed the arbitrary enactments of the Pharisees. — *Godet*. (3) It served to show that he had no desire to invade the rights of any human office. Render to the priest what he considers, and what society considers, his rights. — *Genius of the Gospel*. (4) The design was evidently to prevent any suspicion as to the validity of the cure, by having the attestation of those recognized authorities who were enemies to him. — *Genius of the Gospel*.

45. He went out: from the place, and the circle of people, where the miracle was effected. — *Morison*. Began to publish. Where men ought to publish Christ, alas! how silent are they. Here, when the great Saviour commanded silence, this man will publish the cure. Thus our Lord's work was hindered. How many from ill-timed zeal prevent much good! — *Jacobus*. Could no more: in a moral sense, without defeating his purpose. — *Alexander*. Openly enter into the city. Not the city of Capernaum, but any city or town. He was compelled to go into the desert places. He was unable, because, the moment that his presence was recognized in a town, he was liable to be surrounded and hemmed in by a surging crowd of ignorant, and ignorantly expectant, gazers, wonderers, and volunteer followers. One sees now how wise it was to tell the leper to hold his tongue. — The phrase *no longer*, in the expression, *he was no longer able to enter into towns*, has reference to the particular period spoken of. It was a period that continued only for a limited season. — *Morison*. And they came to him from every quarter. The people kept coming to him, notwithstanding the difficulty of reaching him, and the inconveniences connected with a sojourn, even for a very limited period, in an unpopulated district.

What we must do in the sense of our spiritual leprosy: (1) We must see Jesus, inquire after him, acquaint ourselves with him. (2) We must humble ourselves before him, as this leper, seeing Christ, fell on his face; we must be ashamed of our pollution, and, in the sense of it, blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus. (3) We must earnestly desire to be cleansed from the defilement and cured of the disease of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God. (4) We must firmly believe in Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us. Lord, thou canst make me clean, though I be full of leprosy. No doubt is to be made of the merit and grace of Christ. (5) We must be importunate in prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace: He fell on his face, and besought him. They that would be cleansed must reckon it a favor worth wrestling for. (6) We must refer ourselves to the good-will of Christ: Lord, if thou wilt thou canst. — *M. Henry*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Dean Howson's *Miracles of our Lord*, 11: 1-20, on "Healing in Christ for all;" and 1: 177-196, on "The Prayer of the Leper." George MacDonald's *Miracles of our Lord* has excellent hints on miracles, pp. 1-7, and on "Peter's wife's mother," pp. 25-38. On leprosy see *Land and Book*, 11: 516-520; Trench on *Miracles*; Dr. Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel*, pp. 97-101; *Medical Record*, March 12 and Feb. 19, 1881; *Biblical Treasury*, 1: 256; Bush's *Illustrations of Scripture*, pp. 73-74; MacKenna's *Christ's Healing Touch*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Christ's healing helpfulness a proof of his divine mission. There is a legend that the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, reproached him for being converted to Christianity. He replied by inviting her to a test of the power of her religion and his. Crato and Zeno, the famous Greek philosophers, were the judges. Zambri, the

magician of Helena, said, "I know the name of the Omnipotent. Let them bring me the fiercest wild bull that can be found, and when I have uttered that name in his ear he will fall dead." And it so came to pass. But Sylvester, on Constantine's side, said, "The name he has pronounced cannot be that of God, but of Satan; for Christ does not strike the living dead, but restores the dead to life. Let Zambri restore the dead creature to life." But he could not. Then Sylvester made the sign of the cross, and the bull rose up alive, and no longer fierce, but tame and gentle. It is in saving men, in giving life to dead sinners, in curing from evils, that Christ proves his divine power. — *Foster's Cyc.* (1 : 4938).

II. **Christ the antidote of sin.** *The Poison Bush.* — At a sabbath-school anniversary in Brooklyn some years since, Rev. Dr. Hodge related the following interesting fact. During a visit he made to the Bahama Islands, a shower of rain unexpectedly fell. On this occasion a little colored boy was caught in the shower at a distance from home, and, having no place to go for protection, crept under a bush that was near. Its foliage, however, was not dense enough to keep him from the rain, and he was wet by the water trickling through the leaves. Unfortunately for him the bush was a poison-bush; and the water falling on the leaves caused the poison to strike into his little limbs, so that in a short time he was dead. After the shower he was found, and carried to his home. Dr. Hodge was requested to attend his funeral. The circumstances of his singular death excited his curiosity, and he wished to learn something more about the fatal poison-bush. An aged negro told him that it grew abundantly upon the island, but that by its side there always grew another bush, which was its antidote; and that if the little boy had known it, and had rubbed himself with the leaves of the healing bush, the poison would have done him no harm. What an illustration is this of the sad fate of those who have been poisoned by sin, and know not how to escape from its dreadful consequences! But for this fatal poison there is a sure remedy, provided by the same God who placed the antidote beside the poison-bush. The cross of Christ is the tree of life. Let the suffering and the dying come to that, and they shall be saved; for "its leaves are for the healing of the nations." — *The Christian Weekly.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 30-34. The nature of Christ and of Christianity is always to help, to save, to cure, both the body and the soul. This is the mark of their divineness.
2. Christ heals every kind and degree of evil.
3. We have the spirit of Christ, and are true Christians, in proportion as we are helping and saving men.
4. We cannot save sinners, but we can bring them to Christ the Saviour.
5. Ver. 31. When God has healed us, let us minister to others.
6. Ver. 35. Every one, like Christ, needs seasons of retirement and prayer. Spiritual growth comes from activity in Christian work, and seasons of restful communion with God.
7. Ver. 39. The harvest work in the world is casting out the devils of sin. Building cities and ruling empires are nothing in comparison.
8. Ver. 40. Sin is like leprosy, — incurable, loathsome, contagious, hereditary, painful, all-pervasive, from small beginnings; shameful, separating from others.
9. Learn from the leper how the sinner should come to Jesus, and be saved. He *felt* his disease; *despaired* of human help; *believed* in the power of Jesus; he came with his leprosy, and *submitted* to the will of Jesus. — *Clark.*
10. Ver. 41. We need to give men the touch of sympathy: let heart meet heart.
11. In the services we are called to render one another, we fail far oftener from want of *will* than want of *power*. We fail to use many opportunities, not because we *cannot*, but because we *will not*, use them. — *Houson.*
12. The healed by Christ are his living witnesses that he can save men. Even enemies must acknowledge the change.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this lesson is set forth CHRIST, THE GREAT PHYSICIAN, who has come to this world to heal the diseases of the bodies and the souls of men. (1) *He healed a dear friend of his disciples* (vers. 29-31), as he is glad to heal those we love, if we bring them to him. (2) *Then he healed great multitudes* (vers. 32-34), showing the nature of his religion to heal and to help. (3) *He prepared for his great labors by solitary prayer* (ver. 35), as we need the more to commune with God, and get strength from Heaven, the more we have to do. (4) *He made his first missionary tour through Galilee* (vers. 36-39); and on this tour (5) *he healed a leper, — the type of sin and its cure* (vers. 40-45), a most helpful illustration of the evil of sin, and of the way of salvation by going to Christ to be saved.

LESSON IV. — JANUARY 22.

POWER TO FORGIVE. — MARK 2:1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* — ISA. 43:25.

TIME. — May, June, A. D. 28. The paralytic was cured some days after the healing of the leper (in our last lesson), on Jesus' return from his *first tour* of Galilee. The calling of Matthew was not very long after. But Matthew's feast was probably several weeks later, in the autumn, A. D. 28, following Mark 5:21. See *Andrew's Life of Christ*, pp. 277-283.

PLACE. — The paralytic was cured at Capernaum. Matthew's place for the receipt of custom was at Capernaum, probably, upon the Damascus road near its entrance into the city. The road from Damascus to the cities along the coast passed by "Jacob's Bridge" over the Jordan, and thence along the shore of the lake. — *Andrews*. The feast of Matthew was also at Capernaum.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea. But probably Herod was on his visit at Rome at this time, and so was not acquainted with the marvels taking place among his people. — *Andrews*.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 9:2-13. Luke 5:17-32.

HARMONY. — Some place the feast of Matthew immediately after his call (*Tischendorf, Stier*). But *Andrews* and *Robinson* place it several weeks later, and all the events recorded in Mark 2:18-5:21 intervene between vers. 14 and 15. In this interval are included the cure of the withered hand (Matt. 12:9-14), the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, and 7), many parables by the sea-shore (Matt. 13:1-52. Mark 4:1-34), the stilling of the tempest, and the healing the Gergesene demoniac (Matt. 8:28-34).

1. And again ¹he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached ²the word unto them.

And when he entered again ¹into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house. And many ²were gathered together, so that there was no longer room *for them*, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them. And *they* ³

¹ Matt. 2:1. Luke 5:18.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **The Return from the First Circuit.** — Vers. 1, 2. 1. **Again he entered . . . after some days.** This was at the close of the first *circuit of Galilee*. Jesus could not enter Capernaum before, on account of the excitement caused by the healing of the leper, and his disobedience in proclaiming the cure everywhere; because he would be overwhelmed with calls to cure bodily diseases, and not have time to preach and teach for the healing of souls from sin. He had retired to secluded places; but now after a time, probably not long, the excitement having subsided, he returns quietly to his city home. **It was noised.** Rumored, reported. **That he was in the house.** Either his own house, which he occupied with his mother and his brethren (Matt. 4:13), or possibly that of St. Peter. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. The article being wanting in the original, the phrase is equivalent to *at home*. — *Schaff*.

2. **Many were gathered together.** Entering with Oriental freedom into the house where the Saviour was. It would be a humble house; and the public apartment, or family-room, in which our Saviour would be seated, was soon crowded to the door. — *Morison*. Luke (5:17) says that among them were Pharisees and doctors of the law from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. He also intimates that other cures were performed at this time. — *Abbott*. **No room . . . not so much as about the door.** The Evangelist, as the Germans would say, *presentiates* the scene. He makes us spectators of it, *as if we were present, and looking on*. We see the public room rapidly filling up, till it is crowded to the door. The people, however, still come flocking toward the door, and choke up the whole space

3. And ^a they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

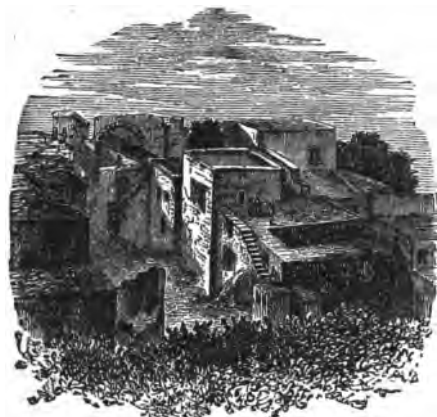
5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. But there 6

around, till there is no longer room. Those who are outside stretch their necks eagerly to get a glimpse of the rabbi, or to catch something that he says. — *Morison*. And he preached the word. Not *heralded*, as in 1:39, but *spoke*. The term *preached* employed in our Authorized Version summons up before our imagination more of the nature of a *public proclamation*, or *harangue*, than is indicated by the Evangelist's expression. The Saviour was in a private house, and sat *talking* to the people. Such is the import of the term. It is almost always rendered *speak* in our version, sometimes *talk* (or *say* or *utter*); never *preach*, except here and in four or five places in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in all of these it would be better to render it *speak*. — *Morison*. The word. That is, the word of the kingdom of God, that it was at hand, and that repentance and faith were the necessary preparations for it (Matt. 4:17; 13:19, 20). Observe how simple must have been the preaching of Christ, a house-to-house preaching. — *Abbott*.

II. **Healing of one sick of the palsy.** — Vers. 3-12. 3. And they come. While Jesus is talking. One sick of the palsy. *Palsy* is a contraction of the word *paralysis*. A disease which deprives the part affected of sensation or the power of motion, or both, according as the sensory or the motor nerves, or both, are attacked. As the term is used in the New Testament, it imports apoplexy, or paralysis of the whole system. A fearful form of this disease is known in Eastern countries. The limbs remain immovably fixed in the position in which they were at the time of the attack, and the suffering is so exquisitely severe that death is often occasioned in a few days (Matt. 8:6). — *Schaff's Bible Dictionary*. It is evident from the narrative that the patient in this case was rendered utterly helpless by his palsy. The disease in its worst forms is generally incurable. — *Abbott*. Borne of four. He would be suspended on his bed, pallet, or mat, between two pairs of bearers. A bearer would have hold of each corner. — *Morison*.

4. Could not come nigh unto him for the press. The crowd. Here, then, we have a reason, as one has observed, why it was "expedient that our Lord should depart," and that "the Comforter should come." The throng of multitudes crowding after the bodily presence of Christ was a hindrance to the gospel; while many could not "get at him by reason of the press," and even some, for a season, might go "empty away." His body was necessarily limited by space, but the Spirit of the Lord is in all places. — *James Ford*. They uncovered the roof (see Illustrative, I.). Broken it up. They dug it out, scooped it out, i.e., the earth, clay, or material with which the roof was covered (see Illustrative, I.). — *Morison*. They let down the bed. The roof was so low that they could let it down so that those below could receive it, without the aid of ropes, but simply by holding the corners. The word translated bed (*krabattos*) was an unclassical term for a narrow couch, or litter, on which only one person could lie. — *Morison*. This was a small, low couch or bed of the commonest description, such as was



HOUSETOP.

used by poor people, having a mere network of cords stretched over the frame to support the mattress. — *Abbott*. Sometimes merely a sheepskin, used for the service of the sick, or as a camp-bed. — *Schaff*.

5. And when Jesus saw their faith. The faith of the whole party, consisting of

6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7. Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? ¹ who can forgive sins but God only?

were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth his man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God? And straightway 8

¹ Job 14: 4. Isa. 43: 25.

the paralytic himself and of his friends who had acted with him and for him. Jesus could look into their hearts, and see, and no doubt he did thus look; but at the same time their faith was signally manifested by their outward acts. — *Morison*. The sick man and his friends showed their faith by overcoming great obstacles in order to come to Christ for help; and this showed their confidence, both in his willingness and his ability to help. Observe the illustration of true faith, — not a strong conviction of any doctrine about Christ, but a strong trust and confidence in Christ. Observe, too, that, apparently, Christ answers the prayer before it is presented. They say nothing: he speaks to the silent prayer of their actions. — *Abbott*. **Son**. Or, more literally, *child*. Partly, no doubt, because he was young, but principally because there was a beautiful filial confidence in his heart. — *Morison*. It expresses Jesus' tender sympathy and love toward the sick man. Matthew says that he followed this word with "*Be of good cheer*." **Thy sins be forgiven thee**. The verb is in the perfect passive indicative: *Thy sins have been forgiven thee* now and henceforth. — *Cambridge Bible*. The Lord, looking into the heart of the afflicted man, saw that he was more distressed on account of his sins than of his sickness; and so he first of all spoke peace to his conscience. Possibly he had brought his sickness upon himself by means of his sins; but he was now penitent, and a firm believer in the Messiah. — *Morison*. He saw into the moral condition of the sick man, and knew how it came that this paralysis was really the punishment of his special sins (probably of sensuality). Accordingly he first of all promises forgiveness as being the moral condition necessary to the healing of the body; and then, having by forgiveness removed the hinderance, he proceeds to impart that healing itself by an exercise of his supernatural power. — *Meyer*. Jesus saw that the assurance of forgiveness was what he most needed, whether because his conscience was oppressed with a sense of guilt, or that he must be brought to think more of the sin than of the suffering. — *MacDonald*. It would seem that the man's conscience had been quickened through his sickness. — *Professor M. Riddle*.

6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there. They had scented heresy from afar, and had come to pry censoriously and inquisitorially into the teaching of the wonderful upstart rabbi. (See Luke 5: 17.) — *Morison*. The scribes, or rabbis, were the heads of the nation in the widest sense; for the religion of the people was also their politics. They were the theologians, the jurists, the legislators, the politicians, and, indeed, the soul of Israel. — *Geikie*. They had apparently come to see how the new teacher who had so startled them at Jerusalem was carrying on his work in Galilee, and as far as they could to hinder it. — *Ellicott*. **Reasoning in their hearts**. The term is graphic in the original. They started a dialogue with themselves within their own minds. *Themselves spoke to themselves*, as it were, but with bated breath. — *Morison*. The Lord saw the reasonings of the scribes, just as he had seen the faith of the bearers, and the penitence of him whom they bore. — *Stier*.

7. Why doth this (contemptuously) man thus speak? Another reading adopted by critical editors, Tischendorf, Hort, and Westcott, is even more forcible: "Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth." — *Cook*. **Speak blasphemies**. Blasphemy (Greek *blas*, injury, *pheme*, to speak) is an indignity offered to God by words or writing: reproachful, contemptuous, or irreverent words, uttered impiously against God. — *Webster*. "Blasphemy," says Sir George Mackenzie, in his *Laws and Customs of Scotland in Matters Criminal* (Tit. iii., § 1), "is called in law, *divine lese majesty or treason*; and it is committed either (1) by denying that of God which belongs to him as one of his attributes, or (2) by attributing to him that which is absurd, and inconsistent with his divine nature," or, as it may be added (3), by assuming to one's self, or ascribing to others, what is an incommunicable property or prerogative of God. It is with a reference to this third form of the crime that the word is used in the passage before us. — *Morison*. If Christ were but a man, as they imagined, the scribes would have been right. And yet so far he had not said that he forgave the sins, but merely declared them forgiven. — Christ says nothing more than the prophets frequently say when they announce the grace of God (*Calvin*). But he does now assume the power which they have denied him, and this without calling in question their principle, that only God can forgive sins. — *Abbott*. **Who can forgive sins but God only?** Sins are against God, and therefore only God can forgive them; for in the nature of things only he can forgive against whom the offence has been committed. I can

8. And immediately, 'when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9. ² Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*?

10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11. I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.*

12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven: or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all: insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

¹ Matt. 9: 4. ² Matt. 9: 5.

forgive the evil done to myself, but I cannot forgive the evil done to my neighbor. He only can forgive that. So that the reasoning of the scribes was right: "only God can forgive sins." Jesus, forgiving sin, either blasphemed or was divine. He goes on to prove that he was divine. — *P.*

8. **Jesus perceived in his spirit.** Or, by his spirit: not from what he saw or heard, but by his divine insight into the hearts of men. And his speaking to them out of this divine knowledge of their thoughts was one proof to them of his divinity, and added force to the argument from the miracle that followed. — *P.*

9. **Whether is it easier to say.** In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that he does not ask, *which is easiest, to forgive sins, or to raise a sick man*, — for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing, — but, which is easiest, to *claim this power or that*; to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? That (i.e., the former) is easiest; and I will now prove my right to say it by saying it with effect, and with an outward consequence setting its seal to my truth, the harder word, Arise and walk. By doing that which is capable of being put to the proof, I will vindicate my right and power to do that which in its very nature is incapable of being proved. It would be easier for a man equally ignorant of the French and Chinese languages to claim to know the last than the first. Not that the language itself is easier, but that in the one case multitudes could disprove his claim, in the other hardly a scholar or two in the land. — *Trench.*

10. **That ye may know.** Have certain knowledge, by convincing proof. So we may know that our sins are forgiven. **The Son of man.** This is the name by which the Lord in one pregnant word designates himself as the Messiah, the Son of God manifested in the flesh. — *Alford.* Our Lord applies the term to himself (the apostles do not thus speak of him) as the *head and representative of the new humanity*. — *Prof. M. Riddle.* **Power on earth.** More correctly, *authority*. The question at issue was, whether Jesus had a right to forgive. On earth. Where the pardon is granted, in contradistinction from heaven, whence the Son of man derived his authority. — *Prof. Riddle.* Mark the word *authority*. The Saviour is not referring to a matter of mere power. The forgiveness of sins is a moral act, connecting itself with a moral system, and having to do therefore with moral rights. — *Morison.* But the power to work a miracle in one's own name proves one to be divine, and therefore the possessor of the authority to forgive.

11. **I say unto thee.** How thoroughly conscious the Saviour must have been of his divine authority and power! His whole influence in the country and the world at large, in the age and for all ages, lay trembling, as it were, in the balance, and perilled, so to speak, on the result of his fiat. If failure had been the result, his humiliation would have been overwhelming and final. — *Morison.*

12. **Took up the bed.** See on ver. 4. **Amazed . . . glorified God.** Three emotions are mentioned on the part of the multitude: (1) wonder, (2) gratitude, which is the sense of *Glorified God*, (3) reverent fear (mentioned by Matthew). — *Prof. Riddle.* On all occasions of very great intensity of feeling, the spirit of man instinctively opens into the presence of the Infinite Spirit. — *Morison.* This miracle may be regarded as an enacted parable of sin and redemption. The paralytic typifies (1) the sinner by his original helplessness (Isa. 40: 30. John 6: 44); (2) faith, by his earnestness to come to Christ in spite

13. ¹ And he went forth again by the sea side ; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14. ² And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

And he went forth again by ¹³ the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he ¹⁴ passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alpheus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

¹ Matt. 9: 9. ² Matt. 9: 9. Luke 5: 27.

of obstacles (Ps. 25: 15; 86: 2, 7); (3) a common Christian experience, by the delay he suffers between his repentance and faith *and his cure* (Jas. 5: 7, 8); and (4) the power of divine grace, in the ability to obey Christ's command, received in the very attempt to comply with it (Phil. 4: 13). — *Abbott*.

III. The Call of Matthew. — Vers. 13, 14. 13. He went forth; i.e., from the town of Capernaum to the shore of the lake, probably through a suburb of fishers' huts and custom-houses. — *Cambridge Bible*. This expression indicates the beginning of a second missionary circuit. — *Cook*. By the sea side. Jesus was a lover of nature. No wonder: it was his workmanship. — *Morison*. But now he went forth because it was the most convenient place in which to teach large multitudes. The multitude resorted . . . he taught; i.e., by the tense of the original, *The multitude kept coming to him, and he kept teaching them*. — *Morison*. The Lord taught the people, and preached the gospel in field-meetings, house-meetings, mountain-meetings, ship-meetings, synagogue-meetings, and temple-meetings. — *Richard Baxter*.

14. As he passed by. The Evangelist, after narrating in epitome the Lord's journey to the lake, and his walk by the shore, steps back to take up a certain thread of incident which happened on the way. — *Morison*. Levi. Afterwards called Matthew (Matt. 9: 9). It was quite customary among the Jews for persons who were entering upon an entirely new career to assume a new name, or a surname that had hitherto been lying in comparative abeyance. — *Morison*. Levi was probably the name by which he was known to his Jewish brethren. He may have changed his name after and in memory of his call, so that he who had before been known by the name of Levi was now known as Matthew, or Mat-thathias, a favorite name amongst the Jews after the Captivity, and = *Theodore*, the "Gift of God." — *Maclear*. We get some hint of his character by his applying to himself (Matt. 10: 3) the odious title, *the publican*, which none of the other Evangelists apply to him; and by his not mentioning his own name as the one who made the feast spoken of in the next verse. — *P*. Son of Alpheus. Not the Alpheus who was father of James the Younger (Matt. 10: 3). Alpheus was a common name among the Jews. Sitting. "The people of this country sit at all kinds of work. The carpenter saws, planes, and hews with his hand-ads, sitting on the ground, or upon the plank he is planing. The washerwoman sits by the tub; and, in a word, no one stands where it is possible to sit. Shopkeepers always sit; and Levi sitting at the receipt of custom is the exact way to state the case." — *Dr. Thomson: The Land and the Book*. Receipt of custom. Situated as Capernaum was at the nucleus of roads which diverged to Tyre, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Sepphoris, it was a busy centre of merchandise, and a natural place for the collection of tribute and taxes. — *Farrar*. The word which is here, and in the other synoptic Gospels, rendered *receipt of custom*, means *customs' office*, or *custom-house* as it were. The phrase may be interpreted as meaning *sitting and presiding over the tax-office*; or it may simply mean that Levi was sitting "on" the elevated table, counter, or "bank," which constituted the central and essential part of the tax-office. The common shops and banks in the Eastern bazaars are somewhat like *box-beds*, "in" and "on" which, as we have ourselves often witnessed, the shopman or banker sits cross-legged, while either waiting for, or actually transacting, business. No doubt Levi's tax-office would be something of the same kind; and the elevated platform or floor "on" which he would be sitting, being also the counter, or bench, or "bank" on which the business was done, would be the real *tax-place*. — *Morison*. Follow me. Our Lord wished Levi to follow him literally, that is, take his place behind in the company of his personal disciples or constant attendants. And he arose: from his place at the receipt of customs. Luke (5: 28) says that he left all; and that his business was profitable, may be inferred from the fact that he made a great feast, and in his own house (Luke 5: 29). And followed him. We cannot doubt that the new disciple had already listened to some of the discourses and beheld some of the wondrous miracles of Christ; so that he was now, in the eyes of Him who read the heart, prepared for his call. — *Cambridge Bible*. Levi, however, we may be sure, would not leave the duties of the

15. ¹ And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him.

16. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

And it came to pass, that he ¹⁵ was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes ¹⁶ of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans

¹ Matt. 9: 10.

tax-office neglected. If he was a subaltern, his place would be easily supplied. If, as is more probable (see next verse), he was a superior officer, some one or other of his subordinates would be ready to step into his place until final arrangements should be made. — *Morison*. Matthew was a PUBLICAN. These were inferior officers employed as collectors of the Roman taxes, which were of a character to make any collector sufficiently odious. Every article exported or imported paid a customs-tax; every article sold paid a tax on each sale; every house, every door, every column, had its special tax; all property, real and personal, was taxed; and the citizens of subordinate provinces, including therefore the Jews, paid in addition a poll-tax. The method of collecting these taxes made them the more burdensome, and those employed in their collection more odious. The provinces were farmed out by the Roman government to wealthy individuals, or joint-stock companies, who paid large sums for the privilege of collecting the taxes. They, in turn, let these provinces in smaller districts to sub-contractors, who employed in the collection of taxes the lowest and worst class of the native population, since no others would assume a task so hateful (and because they knew the ways of the people). They were required to pay over to their superiors the exorbitant sum fixed by the law, and depended for their profit on what they could make by fraud and extortion. They were universally feared, hated, and despised, but nowhere more than in Palestine. In the eyes of the Jews they were not only odious as tax-collectors, but yet more hateful as traitors to their nation, and apostates from their religious faith. "For many maintained that it was an indignity to God for the favorites of Heaven to have to pay taxes to a foreign and heathen potentate." The Talmud classes them with thieves and assassins, and regards their repentance as impossible. No money known to have come from them was received for religious uses. They were classed with sinners, with harlots, with heathen, in public estimation, and probably in their actual and customary companionships (Matt. 9: 11; 11: 19; 18: 17; 21: 31, 32). — *Abbott*. They lost religious caste instantly and entirely, and were mercilessly driven into the outskirts of religious society, or farther out still. — *Morison*. But it does not follow that Matthew himself was an extortioner. Certainly, at least, he left all the sins of his class behind when he became a disciple. — *P*. His admission of a publican as a disciple could not fail to irritate his enemies still more. But he had no hesitation in his course. Sent to the lost, he welcomed to his inmost circle one of their number in whom he saw the germs of true spiritual life, in disregard of all the prejudices of the time, and all the false religious narrowness of ecclesiastical leaders. He desired, in the choice of a publican as apostle, to embody visibly his love for sinners, and show the quickening virtue of the kingdom of God even in the most unlikely. — *Geikie*.

IV. The Feast in Matthew's House. — Vers. 15-17. 15. And it came to pass. Probably several weeks after the call (see *Place*). Jesus sat (was reclining) at meat in his (Levi's) house. It is St. Luke who tells us that St. Matthew made "a great feast" in honor of his new Master (Luke 5: 29); and to it, perhaps by way of farewell, he invited many of his old associates. This shows that he had made large sacrifices in order to follow Christ. — *Maclear*. Many publicans (see on ver. 14) and sinners. The object of the feast seems to have been, both to honor the Lord, and to give him an opportunity to meet, in social intercourse, many of Matthew's own class, publicans and sinners. These plainly constituted the great body of the invited guests. — *Andrews*. Thus to recline at table with publicans and sinners, was to come into the most intimate social relations with them. That culture which is so refined that it cannot bear contact with the sinful is not Christian culture. — *Abbott*. Many, and they followed him. Jesus had many followers among this class. They needed his help, and their outcast position made them feel their need of a Saviour.

16. Scribes and Pharisees. The scribes, who were *Pharisees*, were the strict religionists of the Jews. Their religion consisted so much of form and so little of spirit that they feared to lose the form, knowing that thus they would lose all. *The Pharisees*. A

17. When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, ¹They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

and sinners. And when Jesus ¹⁷heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

¹ Matt. 9: 12, 13; 18: 11. Luke 5: 31, 32; 19: 10. 1 Tim. 1: 15.

sect whose name was derived from the Hebrew *Pharisees* (separated), because they pretended to be very holy. They were a large and influential sect, holding to the strict letter of the law and traditions, proud of their formal morality, and their descent from Abraham. **Saw him eat.** It is not probable that any Pharisees were invited, nor that they would have accepted an invitation had one been given them. — *Andrews.* They seem to have entered with Oriental freedom into the hall or guest-chamber where the company were seated at table. — *Morison.* **Said unto his disciples.** Notice, they speak not boldly to him, but broach the subject to his disciples, who may have been going in and out, or perhaps coming from the feast. — *Bible Union Notes.*

17. When Jesus heard. Either he overheard it, or the disciples told him. — *Bible Union Notes.* The censorious scribes doubtless intended for his ear what they said to his disciples. — *Morison.* **They that are whole.** Rather, *strong.* Sin is moral weakness; the victim needs moral strength rather than instruction. — *Abbott.* **Have no need of the physician.** The word means a *healer.* Christ's great mission as a physician was to heal the disease of sin. If any were really righteous, as the Pharisees imagined they were, then they did not need his healing power. The fact that these publicans and sinners were notoriously vile and wicked showed how sick they were, and how much they needed his attention. — *Bible Union Notes.* **But they that are sick.** A truism on the physical side of things; but, for that very reason, of the greatest possible significance in its application to the moral side of things. It was the complete explanation and the unanswerable vindication of our Saviour's conduct in going into the society of the moral waifs of the population. He went, not as a *boon companion*, but as a physician. This is the philosophy, in a nutshell, of all home and foreign missions. — *Morison.* **Not to call the righteous, but sinners.** Righteous means the absolutely righteous. Not "such as think themselves righteous;" for none had greater need than such self-deceivers to be called to repentance. He did not come to *call* the righteous; for there are none such on the earth. It was his aim to *speak to men in an inviting way*; that is, to *call them in order to prevail with them to stop in the career which they were pursuing, and to turn toward God and goodness.* — *Morison.* **To repentance.** These words are not found here in the best manuscripts; but there is no doubt of their authenticity in Luke, and therefore no doubt that they are a part of Christ's response, and qualify and interpret his declaration. He comes to sinners that he may bring sinners to himself: he does not conform to them, but conforms them to him by the renewing of their minds. His example is authority for social mingling with sinners (for the sole object of making them better), but not for acquiescing in or giving even tacit sanction to their sinful practices. — *Abbott.*

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Trench on the Miracles, p. 163. *The Genius of the Gospel*, pp. 123-132. As to Eastern houses, see *Land and Book*, vol. ii., pp. 6-8; Miss Rogers's *Domestic Life in Palestine*, p. 47; Dr. Robinson's *Later Researches*, pp. 39, 44. *Sermons* by F. W. Robertson, series 3, "Ab-solution;" and series 5, "Christ's way of dealing with sin." *Sermons* by D. L. Moody, "Faith;" R. C. Trench, *Westminster Sermons*; Spurgeon, series 9, "Carried by Four." On Matthew's feast, see Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 230; Geikie's *Life of Christ*, chap. 34; Farrar's *Life of Christ*, chap. 24.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **Eastern houses.** The houses of Capernaum, as is evident from the ruins, were like those of modern villages in this same region, low, *very low*, with flat roofs reached by a stairway from the yard or court. Jesus probably stood in the open *Jewan*, or interior court, and the crowd were around and in front of him. Those who carried the paralytic, not being able "to come at him for the press," ascended to the roof, removed so much of it as was necessary, and let down their patient through the aperture. Examine one of these houses, and you see at once that the thing is natural, and easy to be accomplished. The roof is only a few feet high (made of beams three feet apart, covered with bushes, mortar, and a coating of earth); and by stooping down, and holding the corners of the couch, —

merely a thickly-padded quilt, as at present in this region, — they could let down the sick man without any apparatus of ropes or cords to assist them. And thus, I suppose, they did. The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants, accustomed to open their roofs, and let down grain, straw, and other articles, as they still do in this country. I have often seen it done, and done it myself to houses in Lebanon. I have the impression, however, that the covering at least of the *lewan* was not made of earth, but of coarse matting, . . . or boards, or stone slabs that could be quickly removed. — *Thomson's Land and Book*.

II. Moral paralysis. In one of our city hospitals a young woman of beautiful face and form had lain motionless for many months. Except for the brightness of her face, and the action of the hands, her body was apparently dead. Yet she spoke with great confidence of her restoration to health at some future time, and was enthusiastic in planning good works then to be executed. A physician remarked that it was the saddest case he had ever witnessed. It was a paralysis, not of the flesh, but of the mind: it was a *moral paralysis*. The will itself had lost its power of action. She could plan for the future, but not *will* anything at the present moment. After a few months the inactivity bred fatal disorder, and she passed away. This is a picture of the moral paralysis of many. They mean to be Christians at some time: they do not determine to do it *now*. — *Anon.*

III. Christ taking a publican among the number of his disciples. Caste was utterly disallowed: before the great Teacher, all men, as such, were recognized as equally sons of the heavenly Father. Accustomed from infancy to take this for granted, we cannot realize the magnitude of the gift this new principle inaugurated, or its astounding novelty. A Brahmin who should proclaim it in India, and illustrate the social enfranchisement he taught by raising a despised Pariah to his intimate intercourse and friendship, would be the only counterpart we can imagine at this day. — *Geikie's Life of Christ*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 3. Sin is like a paralysis, — a weakness and torpor of the conscience, and the will to do good.

2. It is our privilege to bring those to Christ who can not or will not come of themselves.

3. Ver. 4. Difficulties are in the way of the sinner's cure, to prove and strengthen faith.

4. Faith will find or make a way to come to Christ.

5. Ver. 5. We can have faith for others as well as ourselves.

6. Christ forgives and saves only on condition of faith; for the faith that loves and chooses God is the beginning of heavenly life in the soul. It is useless to forgive those who immediately plunge into sin again.

7. The first need of the soul is forgiveness; then follows the healing of the soul from its sinful nature.

8. Vers. 7, 16. The wickedness of hasty and superficial judgment of others' conduct.

9. Ver. 8. Christ knows our inmost thoughts and motives, — a terror to the bad, but a comfort to the good.

10. Vers. 9-11. Christ proves that he forgives sins, by the results that follow in renewed lives.

11. Three proofs of forgiven sin: (1) consciousness, (2) Christ's promises, (3) souls cured of sin. — *Thomas*.

12. Ver. 14. A bad business is a poor excuse for not following Christ. Follow him out of it. — *Abbott*.

13. Ver. 15. Matthew, an example of a fisher of men: called himself, he calls others. — *Abbott*.

14. Note the marvellous courage of Jesus in facing the popular prejudices of his age.

15. Ver. 16. Do not expect, in doing good, to fare better than your Master, whose best deeds were criticised and found fault with.

16. Christ is our example as to social life. *Be social, even with outcasts, but not in their sins*: go to them with the spirit of truth and religion.

17. *Why Jesus went among the publicans*, — not to be like them, but to make them like him. Why does the doctor go to a sick man? to catch his disease, or to cure him? — *Stock*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We have in this lesson an "ENACTED PARABLE OF SIN AND REDEMPTION," together with Christ's example in dealing with sinners. (1) *The paralytic — a type of sinners* (vers. 1-3). (2) *He is brought to Christ* (vers. 3, 4), as we must bring sinners by our labors and our prayers. (3) *He comes in faith, and finds forgiveness* (ver. 5). (4) *Forgiveness is proved*

and followed by healing (vers. 6-12), as renewed lives follow and prove the forgiveness of our sins. (5) Then *sinners*, even of the worst class, are called to be the disciples of Christ (vers. 13, 14), and may make excellent Christians. (6) *Jesus Christ goes among sinners in order to save them* (vers. 15-17), — an example to us.

LESSON V. — JANUARY 29.

THE PHARISEES ANSWERED. — MARK 2:18-28; 3:1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* — EXOD. 20:8.

TIME. — Summer and autumn, A. D. 28. The exact dates are uncertain. But probably the answer of Jesus to the disciples of John (vers. 18-22) was at Matthew's house, on the day of his feast (the close of our last lesson), and took place in the *autumn*. The *plucking of the ears of corn* (vers. 23-28) carries us back several weeks, and follows close after the healing of the paralytic and call of Matthew, for it must have been while the grain was growing in the *early summer*. If the time given by Luke (6:1), "the second sabbath after the first," means the first sabbath after Pentecost (*Andrews*), then it occurred the 19th May, A. D. 28. The healing of the withered hand was soon after.

PLACE. — Capernaum and its vicinity.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Jesus' answer to John's disciples (vers. 18-22) is found in Matt. 9:14-17, and Luke 5:33-39. The plucking the ears of corn (vers. 23-28), in Matt. 12:1-8 and Luke 6:1-5. The healing of the withered hand (3:1-5), in Matt. 12:9-14, and Luke 6:6-11.

INTRODUCTION.

The storm of opposition was gathering against Jesus, even in the height of his popularity. The new teacher disappointed the false hopes of the Pharisees as to the Messiah. He smote their prejudices right and left with his clear words of truth, as with Ithuriel's spear. He trampled on their rules and customs, in which they had intrenched and smothered their religion. He was clearing away all their rubbish, to them like precious jewels, that the pure religion might have free course, and be glorified. He touched their conscience with his word of life, and the awakened conscience that fails of producing repentance always kindles hate. These Pharisees, therefore, were watching closely that they might find some way of stopping his prosperous career. They found every fault possible: they searched carefully for some mistake or error of his which would put him under the ban of Jewish or Roman law, or the passions of the mob, and thus put an end to this dangerous teaching. The lesson for to-day furnishes further examples of this increasing storm of opposition. — P.

18. ¹And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples

¹ Matt 9:14. Luke 5:33.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Jesus' Answer to the Disciples of John.** — Vers. 18-20. 18. Another question must now be decided by Christ, as soon as he had answered the Pharisees at the feast of Matthew. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees. By this time all the spiritual disciples of John must have become followers of Christ: the rest would lean toward Pharisaism. — *Schaff*. The disciples of John may have come sincerely desiring a solution of the difficulty, while the Pharisees joined with them in the hope of catching Jesus in some real fault. Used to fast, or were fasting. It includes both senses. The Pharisees and the disciples of John were fasting at the time in question, not improbably on the same day as that on which Matthew gave the feast. It seems probable that the banquet was given on one of the two weekly fast-days observed by the Pharisees (see St. Luke 18:12), but not enjoined by the law: this meets all the points, the day, the frequent fasting, and

19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.

the expostulation. — *Cook*. Hammond's paraphrase brings out the right idea: *John's disciples and the Pharisees, "according to their custom of frequent fasting, were now on a day of fast."* — *Morison*. The Pharisees fast. Luke adds, *fast often*. They had instituted a fast twice in the week (on Thursday, because on that day Moses was believed to have reascended Mount Sinai; on Monday, because on that day he returned); yet this was but a traditional institution, so little sanctioned by the Mosaic law, that in it but one day of fasting was appointed for the entire year, the day of atonement. — *Farrar*. Fasts were connected with their superstitions as well as religion. They fasted to secure auspicious dreams, to secure any desired object, or avert any threatened ill. — *Abbott*. But thy disciples fast not? This was the real question. Surely you will not allege that "we" and the Pharisees are too self-denied. But, if not, why is it that thy disciples fast not? — *Morison*. The complaint also implies, If you are a teacher come from God, why does your teaching result in leading your followers from the old established forms and customs, confirmed by the example of our own teacher, John? — *Schaff*. Jesus had silently left the harsh discipline of fasting behind, and had prescribed no formal rules for prayer, such as were common to the rabbis and their disciples, and to those of the Baptist; and a new deputation came to ask him for an explanation. — *Geikie*.

19. And Jesus said. He compares the days of his presence on the earth as a nuptial feast. Can the children (sons) of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? Would not fasting at such a time be most incongruous? The time referred to by our Lord, in his fine parabolic logic, is the period of festivity — often extending to a week, and sometimes even to a fortnight — which was consequent on a happily consummated marriage. If there be a time at all when fasting would be inappropriate, it is such a time. The expression *the sons of the bridechamber* is a Hebraistic phrase for the *grooms-men*, whose duty it was to convey the bridegroom to the bride's residence, and, when she was "taken," to accompany the couple back to the bridegroom's home, — giving expression all along the way, and during the whole festivity, to their feelings of gayety, congratulation, and gladness. — *Morison*. The bridegroom. John the Baptist had long before this called Jesus the bridegroom, and himself the friend of the bridegroom. Jesus thus represents himself in the most tender, intimate, and loving relation possible with his people. All that a perfect husband can be to a wife, in love, in tender care, in anticipating every want, in sympathy, in defence from harm, in support and supply of every want, — all this, multiplied by so much as Jesus is greater and better than man, is he to his church and people. — *P*. The significance of the metaphor is unmistakable. *Christ is the bridegroom; the Church is the bride; the ordained teachers in the Church are the children of the bridechamber, who are instrumental in bringing together bride and groom; the whole period of time intermediate between Christ's first public ministry and his second coming is the wedding-feast, during which the children of the bridechamber are bringing their Lord to the bride; the marriage-supper of the Lamb in the heavenly kingdom is the final consummation of the wedding ceremony.* — *Abbott*. As long as they have the bridegroom with them. As long as Jesus was living with them on the earth. In fact, the disciples suffered no persecution while Christ lived, and neither knew any especial experience of mourning, prior to his passion, nor observed any seasons of fasting. — *Abbott*.

20. Shall be (or shall have been) taken away from them. By his crucifixion, a year and a half later. There is a fine mystical meaning embedded in the word that is translated *shall have been taken away*. The simple verb means *shall have been lifted up*, and the preposition in composition means *away*. The whole word covertly refers to the crucifixion as the *upward way* by which the Bridegroom of the Church was *taken away*. He was *lifted up* (John 12: 32, 33), and thence *went away*. — *Morison*. Then shall they fast in those days. The best manuscripts have in *that day*, but the meaning is the same. Fasting should be the genuine offspring of inward and spiritual sorrow, of the sense of the absence of the Bridegroom in the soul, — not the forced and stated fasts of the old covenant, now passed away. It is an instructive circumstance, that in the Reformed Churches, while those stated fasts which were retained at their first emergence from Popery are universally disregarded even by their best and holiest sons, nothing can be more affecting and

21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

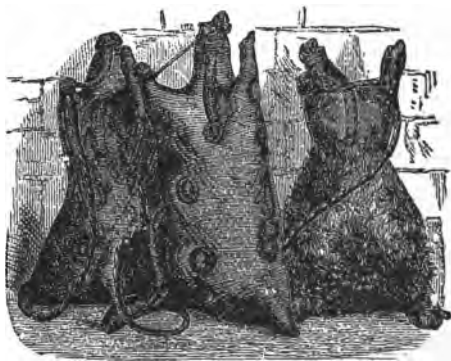
22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

No man seweth a piece of ²¹undressed cloth on an old garment; else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made. And ²²no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins: else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perissheth, and the skins: but *they put* new wine into fresh wine-skins.

genuine than the universal and solemn observance of any real occasion of fasting placed before them by God's providence. — *Alford*. Christ himself prescribed no set fasts, and none were observed by the apostolic Church. But occasional fasts were observed throughout the Old-Testament history by the Jews (1 Sam. 7:6. Neh. 1:4. Joel 2:12. Comp. Isa. 58:3-6), and in the New-Testament history both by Christ and his apostles (Matt. 4:2. Acts 13:2, 3; 14:23). Reading Christ's declaration in the light of this history, the plain inference from it appears to be this: Fasting is the expression of mourning: while Christ was with his disciples in the body, there was no occasion for mourning or fasting; so when the soul is conscious of his spiritual presence, when the Bridegroom is with the children of the bridechamber, they cannot be made to fast in reality and truth; but whenever Christ has withdrawn from the soul, whenever times of darkness hide, or experiences of sin banish him from the soul, or the strong need of a clearer sense of his presence overcomes the desire for food, or a failure in his work indicates a lack of his presence and power (Matt. 17:21), then there will be fasting. In other words, fasting is Christian only when it is the natural expression of a Christian experience. — *Abbott*.

II. Illustrated by two brief Parables. — Vers. 21, 22. 21. No man seweth a piece of new cloth. "The word *new cloth* properly signifies *unfulled cloth*, which as yet has not passed the hands of the *fuller*," whose business it is to shrink and contract the cloth to its natural dimensions. — Garments in the East were made sometimes of leather, sometimes of cloth. The leather which had not been dressed, and the cloth which had not been fulled (i.e., soaked and cleansed with water), was sure to shrink; and, if such, undressed or unfulled (not merely *new*) material was used in repairing a garment, it would soon tear out the old cloth, and a new and worse rent would be produced. — *Abbott*. The patch being of undressed material, would shrink when exposed to the sun, and thus cause a rent. It spoils the garment by shrinking, the new wine bursts the skins by swelling: thus new customs fall short of the old, or go beyond them; in either case, when unseasonably introduced, causing rents, schisms, and inflicting serious damage. — *Cook*. The disciples of John looked not for a new religion, but for a re-formation, a patching-up of the old Jewish religion. To them Christ responds, that he has come to give the world new garments, not to patch the old ones. Any attempt to attach his religion of love to the old religion of forms would be sure to make a worse state of things than that which he attempted to cure. — *Abbott*.

22. New wine is wine not yet fully fermented. In its fermenting it expands, and would thus burst the bottle. — *Abbott*. Into old bottles. Old and frail bottles. In many parts of the country the wine is put up in the skins of animals, chiefly goats, which are translated *bottles* in our version. The entire body of the animal is drawn out of its skin through the opening at its neck. The hair is sometimes partially removed, and the skin tanned. The opening at the neck is used for filling, while the four feet are tied up. The grape-juice which is to undergo the process of fermentation is put into skins which are entirely new, or have been carefully found able to withstand the pressure. — *Van Lennep's Bible Lands*, p. 121. These bottles, as they grew dry with age, became liable to crack, and unable to resist the pressure of the fermenting liquor. — *Ellicott*. Wine spilled, bottles marred. Both are destroyed by putting together things which do not



SKIN BOTTLES.

23. ¹ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went,² to pluck the ears of corn.

24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

And it came to pass, that he ²³ was going on the sabbath day through the cornfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said ²⁴ unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that

¹ Matt. 12: 1. Luke 6: 1. ² Deut. 23: 25.

belong together. New wine into new bottles. *Establishing new truths in the hearts of men is always by a process of fermentation, of excitement and agitation. To confine new truths in old forms only results in shattering the old.* In so far as the soul receives the spirit of Christ as a new inspiration, it will work out for itself a new expression. It may use, but it cannot be confined within, old forms, whether it be of devotional expression, or of doctrinal statement. — *Abbott.* Our Lord is not inculcating or assuming that his disciples would break entirely with the past, and strike out into novelties of religious belief and practice. — *Morison.* This parable would guard us against expecting that our religious experience will be in exactly the same form as that of notable saints of whom we read, or that imitating the forms and ways and outward lives of good men will make us good, or that the measures blessed in one revival are the best at another time. Putting our experience in other people's forms injures our own piety, as well as spoils the former as a help to others. — *P.*

III. The Law of the Christian Sabbath illustrated. — Vers. 23-28. 23. And it came to pass. No particular time is mentioned; but it was probably several weeks before the above conversation with John's disciples, and in the early summer during the ripening harvest (see *Time*). The narrative seems to imply that the ears which the disciples plucked and rubbed were ears of *wheat*, not of *barley*. Now, the first ripe sheaf of barley was offered at the passover (in spring), and the first ripe wheat-sheaf at Pentecost, fifty days later (middle of May). — *Cambridge Bible.* He went through the cornfields. The word *went along* is graphic, suggesting to us a picture. We see Jesus walking along by the margin of extensive stretches of standing grain. These stretches, spreading far and wide over the plain of Gennesaret, come down, on either side, close to the path on which our Lord and his disciples, and a miscellaneous troop of others, are leisurely and gravely walking along in the stillness of the sabbath. It is an unenclosed path, a mere track, such as is common in the same district at the present day. It leads right through the standing grain. — *Morison.* Corn. Grain, wheat, or barley. Indian corn, which we call *corn*, was not known to them (though perhaps to the Egyptians once). On the sabbath day. The Jewish sabbath, — now our Saturday. The disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn; literally, *began to make their way, plucking the ears of corn.* — *Alford.* We must picture then, to ourselves, the Saviour going along through the cornfields. His disciples are with him, and a group of others, inclusive of a band of disputatious and censorious Pharisees. They are on their way to or from some adjoining synagogue. Conversation and lively disputation go on all along the way. At a certain point where there is a crossing, or nearer cut, or a smaller diverging footpath, there is a pause on the part of our Saviour and of some of the Pharisees with whom he was discoursing. While they stand and talk, the Lord's disciples move on. They "began" to advance. Here is the explanation of the "began." Cajetan rightly supposes that they *began to go ahead of our Lord.* But the very narrow path along which they had to advance, being comparatively unused, was overgrown, apparently, at that particular spot, with the crop. The disciples, then, began to walk in upon this line of transit, "making a way." — *Morison.* Pluck the ears of corn. Because, as Matthew says (12: 1), they were hungry. — It was no wonder both he and the disciples were hungry; for no Jew could break his fast till after the morning service at the synagogue, or take supper till after the evening service. — *Geikie.*

24. The Pharisees; who were ever around, watching for some error or mistake on the part of Jesus. St. Matthew, in his "began to pluck," shows how eagerly and instantly the Pharisees clutched at the chance of finding fault. — *Cambridge Bible.* Why do they? i.e., the disciples. Jesus himself was not guilty of the offence. — *Farrar.* On the sabbath day that which is not lawful. Now, there was no harm whatever in plucking the ears: that was not only sanctioned by custom, but even distinctly permitted by the Mosaic law. But the heinous fact was that this should be done *on a sabbath!* — *Farrar.* The law and practice of Palestine continue to be this day what they were so many thousand years ago (Deut. 23: 25). The law allowed them to pluck the grain to appease hunger, but not to apply the sickle to another man's standing grain. "So, also, I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along the wheat-fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their hands, and eat

25. And he said unto them, Have ye never read¹ what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?

26. How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread,² which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

which is not lawful? And he²⁵ said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he entered into the²⁶ house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and did eat the showbread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them

¹ 1 Sam. 21: 6. ² Exod. 29: 32, 33. Lev. 24: 9.

the grains unroasted, just as the apostles are said to have done."—*Dr. Thomson: The Land and the Book*. The point was this: Since the Law had said that the Jews were "to do no manner of work" on the sabbath, the Oral Law had laid down thirty-nine principal prohibitions, which were assigned to the authority of the Great Synagogue, and which were called *abkôth*, "fathers," or chief rules. From these were deduced a vast multitude of *toldôth*, "descendants," or derivative rules. Now, "reaping" and "threshing" on the sabbath day were forbidden by the *abkôth*; and by the *toldôth* it was asserted that plucking corn-ears was a *kind* of reaping, and rubbing them a *kind* of threshing. The vitality of these artificial notions among the Jews is extraordinary. Abarbanel relates that when, in 1492, the Jews were expelled from Spain, and were forbidden to enter the city of Fez lest they should cause a famine, they lived on grass; yet even in this state "*religiously avoided the violation of their sabbath by plucking the grass with their hands.*" To avoid this they took the much more laborious method of grovelling on their knees, and cropping it with their teeth.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*. To break the sabbath, rather than suffer hunger for a few hours, was guilt worthy of stoning. Was it not their boast that Jews were known, over the world, by their readiness to die rather than break the holy day? Every one had stories of grand fidelity to it. The Jewish sailor had refused, even when threatened with death, to touch the helm a moment after the sun had set on Friday, though a storm was raging; and had not thousands let themselves be butchered rather than touch a weapon in self-defence on the sabbath? The "new doctrine" of Jesus would turn the world upside down if not stopped!—*Geikie*. The act of the disciples, strictly and technically speaking, rendered them liable to death by stoning.—*Farrar*.

25. Have ye never read? *never*, though ye are scribes, and devote all your time to the Scriptures? (with a touch of irony at their ignorance.) Perhaps the reproving question may have derived an additional sting from the fact that the very passage which our Lord quoted (1 Sam. xxi. 1-6) had been read on that sabbath, or a few weeks before, as the Haphtarah of the day. The service for the day must have been over, because no meal was eaten till then.—*Farrar*. David did when he had need. Note the emphasis on *need* and *hungred*. His followers had need too, and were hungry; but it is on the acting of David, as one of the most eminent of the Jews, that our Lord concentrates attention. An hungred. The prefixed *an*, like the *a* in *athirst*, is a preposition, equivalent to *on* or *in*, so that the whole expression means *in (the state of being) hungred*.

26. Into the house of God. The tabernacle, which was then located at Nob,—a place probably a little north of Jerusalem and within sight of it (Isa. 10: 32). In the days of Abiathar. It appears from 1 Sam. 21: 1, which is the place referred to here, that Ahimelech was then high priest at Nob; and from 1 Sam. 22: 20; 23: 6, and 1 Chron. 13: 1, 6, it appears that Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech.—*A. Clarke*. But Abiathar was living at that time; and the event took place, not necessarily while he was high priest, but in the time of Abiathar known as the celebrated high priest, who more than likely was the chief aid of his father in giving David the showbread.—If our Lord had mentioned *Ahimelech*, the Pharisees' answer might have been that Ahimelech was punished by God for this profanation of sacred things; he and his were soon overtaken by divine vengeance, and slain: but by specifying Abiathar, who was then with his father (1 Sam. 22: 20), and who (we may reasonably infer from our Lord's words, which are the words of Him who knows all history) was a party to his father's act, and was afterwards blessed by God in his escape and in a long and glorious priesthood, our Lord obviates the objection of the worldly-minded Pharisees, and strengthens his own argument by reminding them that this action took place in the time and under the sanction of one whom they held in reverence as a venerable ornament of the pontifical family and dignity.—*Bp. Wordsworth*. And did eat the showbread. This consisted of twelve loaves placed fresh every sabbath day on the table in the sanctuary (Exod. 25: 23-30; 39: 36). It could be eaten only in the sanctuary and by the priests (Lev. 24: 5-9). Observe that fresh bread had just been put upon the table when David arrived (1 Sam. 21: 6), he taking that which was

27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath :

28. Therefore ¹ the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

1. And ² he entered again into the synagogue ; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day ; that they might accuse him.

that were with him? And he ²⁷ said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.

And he entered again into ¹ the synagogue; and there was a man there which had his hand withered. And they ² watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might

¹ Matt. 12: 8. ² Matt. 12: 9. Luke 6: 6.

carried away. The day, therefore, was the sabbath (Lev. 24: 8).—*Abbott*. Thus David, their favorite saint and hero, had openly and fearlessly violated the letter of the Law with the full sanction of the high priest, on the plea of necessity.—*Farrar*. In Matthew (12: 5) Christ adds another argument, that every sabbath the priests in the temple break the ordinary sabbath law, the sabbath being their busiest day; and yet it was right, "because the greater duty of temple service set aside the law of sabbath rest. Compare John 7: 22, 23." Gave also to them which were with him: shows how exactly the illustration applied.

27. The sabbath was made for man. For man's whole nature, for body and soul, for physical rest, for mental and social improvement, for his spiritual and moral growth, and for his eternal salvation; and a religious observance of the sabbath is best fitted to promote all these. They treat man as nothing but an animal, who advocate the use of the sabbath for mere physical recreation and pleasure. The sabbath was not made for man's body only, but for man, his whole nature. And it was made for man as man, i.e., *all man*; and we must so keep the sabbath as not to take away the sabbath from others.—Christ's principle carried out will bring a perfect keeping of the sabbath.—*P*. Not man for the sabbath. The law of the sabbath is to bend to the highest interests of man, and not the highest interests of man to the sabbath. The sabbath must not, by a superstitious observance, be perverted to the exclusion of mercy and necessity.—*Bible Union Notes*. All our use of the sabbath must be to advance the highest interests of man and all men.

28. The Son of man is lord also of the sabbath. Not, surely, to abolish it,—that, surely, was a strange lordship, especially just after saying that it was made or instituted for man,—but to *own* it, to interpret it, to preside over it, and to ennoble it by merging it in the "Lord's day" (Rev. 1: 10), breathing into it an air of liberty and love necessarily unknown before, and thus making it the nearest resemblance to the eternal sabbatism.—*Jamieson, Fawcett, and Browne*. In "*also*" of the sabbath, the *also* proceeds on the assumption that the lordship of the Son of man has a wide domain. He is the Lord of heaven, the Lord of earth, the Lord of men, the Lord of the sanctuary, and the Lord "*also*" of the sabbath. He hence "doeth with it according to his pleasure," and has a right thus to act.—*Morrison*.

IV. The Man with a Withered Hand.—Vers. 1-5. Recorded also in Matt. 12: 9-14. Luke 6: 6-11. Combining these accounts, it appears that Christ entered the synagogue on the sabbath to teach (Luke); that the scribes and the Pharisees, observing the man with the withered hand, watched to see whether Christ would heal, that they might find a ground of accusation against him (Luke); that they first put the question to him, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days (Matthew); that he, knowing their purpose, replied with a question which disclosed their hypocrisy, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? to which they could make no reply (Mark, Luke); that he looked about upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, then answered their question and his own by the illustration of the sheep (Matthew), which he seems to have subsequently repeated in a slightly different form on another occasion (Luke 14: 5); he then performed the cure, but with a word, *doing nothing*, and so giving no ground on which they could base an accusation.—*Abbott*.

1. And he entered again. This took place on a later occasion, but probably in the synagogue on the next sabbath.—*Cook*. Probably at Capernaum. A man which had a withered hand. Literally, *the hand withered*. It was his right hand, and hence the article "*the*" hand. (Comp. Luke 6: 6.) It had met with some accident, or otherwise suffered some injury, and had in consequence stiffened, and shrunk up. The participial expression rendered *withered* indicates, says Bengel, that it was not a congenital defect.—*Morrison*. For it there is no remedy known to man.—*Abbott*. Tradition says that he was a stonemason, maimed by an accident, who had prayed Christ to heal him, that he might not be forced to beg.—*Farrar*.

2. And they. Luke says it was the scribes and Pharisees. Watched him. The

3. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the ¹hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

accuse him. And he saith ³ unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it ⁴ lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And ⁵ when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored.

¹ or, blindness.

word "watched" is scarcely strong enough: the original denotes jealous, perverse, uncandid observation, the watching of one already hostile. — *Cook*. Whether he would heal on the sabbath. In the former case it was the disciples, and not Jesus, who broke their law of the sabbath. Now they hoped to catch the Master himself in the act. — *P*. Their object was to provoke him to some act on which they could base an accusation of sabbath-breaking, the punishment for which was death. The Mosaic law did not forbid works of healing, but the rabbinical tradition and interpretations did. — *Abbott*. It was allowed only in cases of life and death. — *Ellicott*. Might accuse him. To the authorities.

3. Stand forth. Up, and into the midst of the congregation. — Our Saviour saw that it was a time of crisis, and so he chose to make the man conspicuous, — the "cynosure of eyes." — *Morison*.

4. Is it lawful to do good, or to do evil? He assumes that if a man does not do good when he can, he does evil. To refuse to do good is to choose to do evil. There is *doing* in both cases. There is the outgoing of energy in volition; and thus, radically it is a question of doing right or wrong, and not merely of doing or not-doing. To save life, or to kill? Our Lord puts the case strongly. The principle of action, which he wishes to vindicate, is thus seen in its strongest light. All good-doing to men's bodies lies on the line of life: all withholding of good-doing lies on the line of killing or of death. A terrible home-thrust. They would fain destroy Jesus. "Which of us," he virtually asks, "is breaking the sabbath, — you, or I?" — *Furness*. But they held their peace. They kept silent. They did not wish to discuss principles of action. They did not even wish to look into them that they might understand them. They were simply resolved to hold on by the notions with which they were pre-occupied, and to put down all that might be contrary to those notions. — *Morison*.

5. Looked round about. Took a formal survey of those in the synagogue. — *Schaff*. With anger. Indignation expresses better the meaning. Our Saviour's anger would be no outburst of ill-natured passion. There was no ill-natured passion in him to burst out. It was like God's holy, intense indignation against sin, and against those who lead others into sin. The holier a person is, and the more he knows of the consequences of sin, the intenser must be this indignation. Christ could not help feeling thus toward those who wilfully shut their eyes and hardened their hearts against all the blessedness and glory he had brought to them from God, and not only refused heaven themselves, but did all they could to shut others out. — *P*. Being grieved. The word expresses sympathy and condolence. He was as intensely sorry for them as he was indignant at their course. Only that anger which grieves, which loves the sinner, which is joined with a desire to save him from his sins, is divine or Christian. — *P*. For the hardness of their hearts. Proved by their refusing to be influenced by Jesus' truth and love, and by preferring their false interpretation of the law to the good of man. — "Hardening" is preferable to "hardness," since the original suggests a process as well as a result. This process was going on as the effect of their opposition to him, and as a punishment for this sin against privilege. For it man is responsible. — *Schaff*. Their hearts were hardened, but he grieved for it. — *Alford*. He saith unto the man. As the cure was wrought only by a word, the Pharisees have no ground of accusation: there has been no infraction of the letter of even their own regulations. Observe that with the word of command here, as in others of Christ's miracles (Matt. 9: 6. John 5: 8, etc.), comes power to obey it. So he requires what are impossibilities of withered souls, but with the command imparts power to fulfil (John 1: 12). — *Abbott*. Stretch forth thine hand. The Saviour wished the whole assembly to see the hand, and to take note of its shrunk and shrivelled condition. He stretched it out. The arm was not impotent. And his hand was restored; viz., into its former condition of

soundness. It would be a sublime spectacle. When the tide of returning health rushed expandingly through the shrivelled member, the presence and operation of some supernatural power could not be gainsaid. — *Morison*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Farrar's Life of Christ, chap. 31; *Geikie's Life of Christ*, chap. 38. On Eastern bottles, see *Van Lennep's Bible Lands*, pp. 57, 121. On plucking corn in the fields, see *Dr. Hanna's Ministry in Galilee*, p. 36; *Porter's Giant Cities of Bashan*, p. 194; and *Thomson's Land and the Book*, 2: 510. *Eldersheim's The Temple*, "The Sabbath in the Temple." Among the best works on the sabbath are the *Reports of the New-York Sabbath Committee*, and *Gilfillan on The Sabbath*. *Winslow's Sympathy of Christ*, "The Emotion of Anger in Christ."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The sabbath rightly kept is an oasis in the desert, a tent of refreshment and rest at the close of a six days' journey; a mountain of transfiguration, rising above the valleys of labor and care, where we meet Jesus and the prophets; a Jacob's ladder from the pillow of stone to heaven and God, with the angels of joy and peace and love ever going up and down upon it. — *P*.

II. A precious gift. Admiral Hall, of the British navy, says that while commanding a naval vessel at Hong-Kong, after divine service had been performed one Sunday on his ship, and the sailors were at rest, his intelligent Chinese pilot called his attention to the fact that work was going on on shore as usual, and said, "Your Joss [God] is better than our Joss; for he gives you holiday and rest one day in seven, and we have only one day in the year, on New Year's Day." The admiral, in a recent address to workmen, clinched the striking fact by adding, "And this is the case. Just picture working hard from morning till night for 364 days, and only one day of rest; and then prize the sabbath!" They who use the day of rest as a day of pleasure forget that when it ceases to be a day of rest it will soon become a day of toil; and then comes the ceaseless grind of care and labor which weakens the body and starves the soul. — *Rev. Mr. Hastings in "The Christian."*

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 18-20. Forms are of no avail, except as they express the right spirit.
2. We are not to do away with forms; but they are not unchangeable, and they must ever be adopted to express the living spirit of the gospel.
3. Note the deep and tender love of Christ for his people, as the Bridegroom.
4. Ver. 24. An intolerant and censorious spirit in religion is one of the greatest curses a man can well fall under. — *A. Clarke*.
5. Vers. 23-28. Christ did not abolish the sabbath, but renewed and transformed it.
6. The sabbath is made for man; that is, for the whole man, not for his body alone. A religious observance of the sabbath best rests the body, cultures the mind with the grandest thoughts on the noblest themes, and exalts and comforts the soul, and fits it for heaven.
7. The sabbath should be made a joy, especially to children, and its very method of keeping should be such as to impress its delight upon them.
8. The sabbath was made for all men, and we have no right to so spend the sabbath as to deprive others of its privileges.
9. The sabbath should be a day of doing good to the bodies and souls of men.
10. Ver. 4. To neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil. — *D. Brown*.
11. Ver. 5. God is angry with the wicked every day (as we with the destroyers of innocence, rum-sellers, the misleaders of the young), but it is joined with infinite pity for them, and effort to save them.
12. It is the duty of a Christian to sorrow, not only for his own sins, but also to be grieved for the sins of others.
13. He does not bear the image of Christ, but rather that of Satan, who can either behold with indifference the wickedness of others, or rejoice in it.
14. Nothing is more wretched than an obdurate heart, since it caused Him who is the source of all true joy, to be filled with grief in beholding it. — *T. Horne*.
15. Christ in his dealings with the Pharisees was wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The main truth in to-day's lesson is **THE RIGHT WAY OF KEEPING THE SABBATH**. (1) First, there is exemplified a *general principle of the relation between form and spirit*, vers. 18-22. (2) Then the *sabbath question* is brought up by the action of the disciples,—an *illustration of the sabbath law*, vers. 23-26. (3) Christ lays down the great principles of sabbath-keeping, that *the sabbath is to be used for the good of man,—the whole man, and all men*, vers. 27, 28. Apply these two principles to modern ways of sabbath-keeping, showing what they allow, and what they forbid. (4) *An example by Christ of the right use of the sabbath*, vers. 1-5. He attended church, and did good to the needy.

LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 5.

CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.—MARK 3:6-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.*—JOHN 15:16.

TIME.—Midsummer, A. D. 28. Jesus 32 years old, near the middle of his ministry.

PLACE.—The western shores of the Sea of Galilee. The apostles were chosen on the Horns of Hattin, called the Mount of Beatitudes. This mountain is a ridge running east and west, about a quarter of a mile in length, and sixty feet in height. At each end rises a small cone, or horn. It lies near the centre of the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, three miles from the shore, and seven south-west of Capernaum. It is named from the village of Hattin at its base.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (15th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (third year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (32d year); Herod Philip, of Trachonitis and Idumea (32d year).

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—With vers. 6-13 read Matt. 12:14-21. The list of the apostles is given in Matt. 10:2-4, and Luke 6:12-17, and Acts 1:13.

HARMONY OF EVENTS.—After the healing of the withered hand, Jesus withdraws to the seashore. Multitudes follow him, and he heals many. Leaving the shore in the evening, he goes up into the mountain, and spends the night alone in prayer (Luke 6:12). Early in the morning his disciples come to him by his direction (Mark 3:13), and from them he selects the twelve (Luke 6:17); and coming down with them from the higher peak to a level place on the mountain, he gives to them and to the assembled multitudes the principles of his new kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7).

INTRODUCTION.

Christ had healed the man with a withered hand in the synagogue, on the sabbath, and in the presence of his enemies. But in every way had these enemies been foiled,—foiled in argument, shamed into silence, thwarted even in their attempt to find some ground for a criminal accusation. For (Christ had not plucked and eaten the corn, and) even in healing the man, he had done absolutely nothing which their worst hostility could misconstrue into a breach of the sabbath law. He had not touched the man; he had not bid him exercise his recovered power: he had but spoken a word; and not even a Pharisee could say that to speak a word was an infraction of the sabbath, even if the word were followed by a miraculous blessing.—*D. Glentworth Butler*. But all the more were they determined to entrap him in some way; and proceeded to consult together as to the best ways and means.

6. ¹And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with ²the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

And the Pharisees went out, 6 and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

¹ Matt. 12:14. ² See Matt. 22:16.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Withdrawal of Christ to the Shore of the Sea.—Vers. 6-12. 6. And when the Pharisees went forth. From the synagogue in Capernaum, where the miracle

7. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, ¹ and from Judea,

8. And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed: and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him. And he

¹ Luke 6: 17.

had been performed. *Straightway*, or *immediately*. All things in connection with Jesus were now moving on in hot haste. The whole district was in a whirl of commotion. Hence the Pharisees being, with the rest of the population, under the spell of the movement, resolved to lose no time in getting some scheme concocted for laying violent hands on the disturber. — *Morison*. Took counsel. Held a consultation. With the Herodians. The Herodians were such Jews as favored Herod Antipas, especially in his attempts to be made king over the whole kingdom of his father, Herod the Great, which had been divided into several portions under governors appointed by Rome. "They joined the Sadducees in scepticism, the Greeks in licentiousness, pandered to the Herods in vice and cruelty, and truckled to the Romans." — *Oxford Bible*. Just as the partisans of Marius were called "Mariani," of Pompeius "Pompeiani," so the partisans of Herod the Great and his successors were called "Herodiani." The sect was rather a political than a religious body. Adopting Sadducean opinions, they held that the hopes of the Jewish nation rested on the Herods as a bulwark against Roman ambition, and almost looked to them for a fulfilment of the prophecies respecting the advent of the Messiah. — *Maclear*. Took counsel with the Herodians. Hitherto the Pharisees had been enemies of the Herodians. They regarded them as half-apostate Jews, who accepted the Roman domination, imitated heathen practices, adopted Sadducean opinions, and had gone so far in their flattery to the reigning house that they had blasphemously tried to represent Herod the Great as the promised Messiah. — *Farrar*. And hence the Pharisees, in seeking their co-operation, betrayed the depth of their own irreligious hate. — *Morison*. Vers. 7-12. In the brief paragraph extending from ver. 7 to ver. 12, there is a condensation of many details of our Lord's Galilean ministry. He spoke again and again and again words of grace: he performed again and again and again works of mercy. But the generic sameness of men's wants occasioned a somewhat corresponding sameness in the manifold ministrations of our Saviour's benevolence. Hence one of the reasons that account for the condensation of all the evangelistic narratives. — *Morison*.

7. Jesus withdrew himself; from the city. Why? (1) Because, aware of their purpose (Matt. 12: 15), he avoided coming into collision with the Pharisees, whose opposition would hinder his work, which was not yet finished. (2) In the city the enemies of Jesus would have the advantage of numbers of the worst classes, easily accessible and excitable. (3) To find a more convenient place for teaching and healing, where he would be less liable to interruption, and from a boat he could better preach the gospel to large crowds. (4) He would have easy communication with districts where the Pharisees had less influence, if there should be need of further retreat. Great multitude. Jesus' fame was spreading far and wide. From Galilee. From all parts of the country, where for several months he had been preaching. There should be a period after *followed him*. And from Judea. This is the beginning of a new sentence, and is to be joined with "a great multitude" in ver. 8, which should begin with these words of ver. 7. — The statement of St. Mark is, that, in addition to those who followed our Lord from the district which he had just quitted, a great multitude came from other quarters. — *Cook*.

8. Jerusalem. Jesus had formerly preached several months in Judea; and at the passover in April, a few weeks before this, he had been at Jerusalem, and healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5: 1-16), which made a great stir at that time. Idumea; or Edom, the territory that lay across the south of Palestine, stretching toward the south-east, and including the mountainous region east of the Dead Sea. The inhabitants were descendants of Esau, but had been conquered and made Jews by violence about B. C. 125. The Herod family came from Idumea. And beyond Jordan. This expression *beyond the Jordan* is a kind of indefinite name for the territory that lay east of the Jordan, stretching southward to the Dead Sea, from the Sea of Galilee, or the river Hieromax. The district was called in Greek *Perea*, which just means the *country on the other side*. — *Morison*. About Tyre and Sidon. The leading cities of Phœnicia, north of Palestine, along the sea-coast. They stand here for the whole district. Probably Jews and

9. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11. ¹And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, ²Thou art the Son of God.

12. And ³he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

13. ⁴And he goeth up into a mountain, and

spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him.

And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he charged them much that they should not make him known.

And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto

¹ Chap. 1: 23, 24. Luke 4: 41. ² Matt. 14: 33. Chap. 1: 1. ³ Matt. 12: 16. Chap. 1: 25, 34. ⁴ Matt. 20: 1. Luke 6: 12; 9: 1.

heathen alike came from all these quarters. The route of traffic between the points here specified was by Capernaum, so that reports would quickly spread, and crowds easily gather.—*Schaff*. A great multitude. From all the places mentioned above, not merely from Tyre and Sidon.—The original emphasizes the *greatness of the crowd* in the first instance, and in the second their *coming from different and distant places*.—*Schaff*.

9. That a small ship. Rather, *boat*. The original refers to a boat even smaller than the usual fishing-boats. Wait on him. Keep in constant attendance on him.—*Morison*. Because of the multitude. The *crowd*. A different word from "multitude" (vers. 7, 8), though the one usually so translated. The purpose was, probably, both to teach from the boat and to retire from the crowd when he wished. It was doubtless thus that he retired shortly afterwards (ver. 13). His ministry, rather than his personal comfort, was thus furthered.—*Schaff*.

10. For he healed many. The Evangelist thus explains how it came to pass that the people pressed in upon the person of our Lord. Had he merely taught, like a great rabbi, they would probably have kept at a respectful distance. But he healed as well as taught.—*Morison*. To touch him. Those who merely touched him in faith were healed (see chap. 5: 28-30, Lesson XII.). Jesus required some sensible connection with himself in his cures, to show that the healing came from him, and to teach them the lessons of faith, that their spiritual healing came from spiritual union with Christ. As many as had plagues. Literally, *scourges*. Disease was regarded by the Jews as a scourge from God. Not any particular kind of contagious disease is meant. All physical inflictions would be included under the word here rendered *plagues*.—*Abbott*.

11. Unclean spirits. Persons possessed with them. Called unclean because they caused both physical and moral uncleanness. All that is vile and unclean is natural to demons. When they saw him. The expression is peculiar in the original. The force of the imperfect tense and indicative mood might be represented thus: *whenever they saw him (as was repeatedly the case)*. Fell down before him. They fell down at his feet, doing homage as it were. *The impure spirits* thus acted in the way of actuating the bodies of the possessed. It was a cunning demonic "dodge." But it differentiated demoniac possession from ordinary maladies.—*Morison*. Saying, Thou art the Son of God. As spirits they knew the truth about Christ. They had been on the other side, and seen the truths of his nature. In the presence of Christ, the mighty God, they dared speak only the truth.

12. Straitly. Literally, *much*, strongly, strictly. Not make him known. Who he was. The witness of devils would not be believed even when true; and, the more of such testimony willingly received, the more it would hinder men from believing the truth. Christ has no alliance with evil spirits. All these works showed the love of Christ and of God to men, his desire for their happiness, his care to make them free from every evil. The blessed effects of Christ's mission proved it to be divine. And to-day, as in those days, the convincing proof of Christianity is found in its beneficent effects. It makes everybody better who accepts it. The drunkard becomes sober, the selfish becomes generous, the vile becomes pure. Schools, colleges, education, hospitals, missions, all forms of benevolence, spring up wherever Christ is believed. Wherever there is the most Christianity, there is the most of all the things that raise and bless men. The map of the world is the proof of the Christian religion.—*P.*

II. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles.—Vers. 13-19. 13. And he goeth.

calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

14. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

him whom he himself would: and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve, ¹⁴ that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have ¹⁵

We have now reached an important turning-point in the Gospel history. (1) The fame of the Saviour had spread abroad in every direction throughout the land. But (2) the animosity of the ruling powers had deepened in intensity alike in Judea and Galilee. Meanwhile (3) he himself had seemed to stand almost alone. A few indeed had gathered round him as his disciples, but as yet they did not present the appearance of a regular and organized body, nor had they received a distinct commission to disseminate his doctrines. Such a body was now to be formed. Such a commission was now to be given. Accordingly he retired to the mountain-range west of the lake, and spent the whole night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12). **A mountain.** The scene of his retirement and lonely vigil was in all probability the singular elevation now known as the Karûn Hattin, or "Horns of Hattin," the only conspicuous hill on the western side of the lake, and "singularly adapted by its conformation, both to form a place for short retirement, and a rendezvous for gathering multitudes." Then at dawn of the following day (Luke 6:13), he calleth unto him whom he would. Of the disciples, who had gradually gathered around him, and when they had come to him he selected for himself (Luke 6:13).—*Cambridge Bible*. Whom he would. Christ made his own choice of the men for this office, as he always does.

14. And he ordained (selected, set apart) twelve. The choice in the case of five at least, perhaps of seven, had been previously made (Mark 1:16-20; 2:14. John 1:43, 45).—*Cook*. The present choice was regarded as formal and as final. Henceforth there was to be no return to the fisher's boat or the publican's booth as a source of sustenance; but the disciples were to share the wandering missions, the evangelic labors, the scant meal and uncertain home, which marked even the happiest period of the ministry of their Lord.—*Farrar*.

I. Their Title: apostles (Luke 6:13). The word "apostle" means messenger, one who is sent; but it had acquired in classical Greek a more specific meaning, as the *ambassador*, or *envoy*, of a state. Thus they were sent by Christ, even as he had been sent by the Father (John 20:21).—*Ellicott*. It is like our word *missionaries*.—*Jacobus*.

II. The marks of the apostolic office. (1) Personal intercourse with Christ, that they received a direct and personal impression of the words and works of Christ, and could thus testify of what they had *seen and heard* (John 15:27. Acts 1:21, 22).—*Neander*. (2) Appointment by himself. (3) The gift of the Holy Spirit, breathed upon them by Christ, and more openly conferred, according to his promise, on the day of Pentecost, giving them power to work miracles and to speak in foreign tongues; to which was added the power to confer that gift on others. The union of these signs distinguished the apostles from every other class of ministers.—*Dr. E. de Pressensé*. Strictly speaking, the apostles have no successors. But every true minister of the gospel (and sabbath-school teacher) must be a successor to the apostles, and read his commission in this verse (14). He must have Christ with him (Matt. 28:20), and testify out of his personal experience to the Christ he knows (Acts 26:16. 1 John 4:14, 16); must act as a herald of the Messiah and Saviour; and he must attest his divine authority by his power in and through Christ to fulfil Christ's mission of mercy (Luke 4:18, 19, with John 19:18).—*Abbott*.

III. Their number. The *number* of the apostles corresponded to that of the 12 tribes of Israel, whose names were written on the 12 gates of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, as those of the 12 apostles were written on its 12 foundation stones (Rev. 21:12, 14).

IV. The object of their appointment. (1) *That they might be with him*, might be his constant attendants. He wished to have them beside him, that he might pour his spirit into them, and train them, at once by light and by love, to be his fellow-laborers, and his successors, in teaching the people. (2) *And in order that he might send them forth to preach*. Namely, by and by, when they were inwardly equipped. *That he might send them forth*; that is, that he might make *apostles* of them. This was his ulterior aim. Our Lord could not himself reach very many with his own individual voice; and hence he multiplied it, as it were. He knew that it was all-important for the Israelites in particular, and thence for all men, that they should be earnestly *spoken to* in reference to the kingdom of God. Hence "preachers," or *heralds of good news*, were needed.—*Morison*. There were no books, no records of Christ's deeds and teachings; and the one way to preserve them was

15. And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16. And Simon ¹he surnamed Peter;

17. And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the

authority to cast out devils:
and Simon he surnamed ¹⁶
Peter; and James the *son* of ¹⁷
Zebedee, and John the brother

¹ John 1:42.

to impress them on the minds and hearts of a few, that they might teach the many. — *P.* (3) Ver. 15. To have power (authority) to heal sicknesses, etc. To do the same kind of works of mercy which Jesus had done, and thus to carry out his mission. Works of mercy and love are inseparable from true preaching of the gospel. They were to be the leaders and teachers (not rulers) of the infant Church.

V. Their training was under the personal teaching and example of Christ. Immediately after their appointment as apostles, Christ uttered his wonderful Sermon on the Mount, the declaration of the principles of his new kingdom. — *P.*

VI. Their personality. It behooved him to select a number of men, in whom the riches of his life might be unfolded in every direction. For this end he needed, above all, men in whom the glory of his spirit and the peculiarity of his work might be distinctly identified; laymen, who would not chain his work to existing priestly habits; unlearned men, who would not mix up his wisdom with traditional schemes of philosophy; even comparatively uneducated men, in order that the dulled taste of a diseased worldly civilization might not disturb the culture which the spirit of the incarnate Word was to impart to them. It was through fishermen, country people, and publicans, that the Word of God in the life and doings of Christ was to be declared in its purity. — *Lange.*

VII. Their names. Of the twelve apostles there are four lists, found in Matt. 10:2, Mark 3:16, Luke 6:14, and Acts 1:13. They differ in the following particulars: Luke, in the book of Acts, does not insert the name of Judas Iscariot, who was then dead: both in his Gospel and in Acts he entitles the Simon who here and in Mark is called the Canaanite, Simon Zelotes; Matthew gives as the tenth disciple Lebbeus; Mark calls him Thaddeus; Luke and Acts, *Judas of James*, i.e., either son or brother of James; and Mark says that James and John were surnamed by Christ Boanerges, i.e., the sons of thunder. In other respects the four lists are identical, except that the names are given in a slightly different order by the different writers. They all agree, however, in putting Simon Peter first and Judas Iscariot last; and all agree in arranging them in groups of four, Simon Peter being first of the first group, Philip of the second, James the son of Alphaeus of the third. There are three pairs of brothers among them: Andrew and Peter, James and John, James the Less and Judas or Thaddeus. James and John I believe to have been own cousins of our Lord. With the exception of Judas Iscariot, all were Galileans; several of them were by trade fishermen, a laborious and profitable calling; they were all laymen, that is, there was neither priest nor scribe among them. They have generally been regarded as illiterate men (Acts 4:13); but by this must be understood, not that they were specially ignorant, but that they were not versed in the rabbinical literature, the scholastic theology of their age. Philip and Peter both appear to have been acquainted with the Greek. This is indicated by the application of the Greeks to Philip (John 12:20, 21), and by the fact that the Epistles of Peter were written in Greek. Matthew was a ready and methodical writer; John evidently was a man of culture, as his writings show, and his social position was such as gave him ready access to the high priest's palace during the trial of Jesus (John 18:16); and there are unmistakable indications that several of the twelve possessed wealth or wealthy connections, for the father of James and John had hired servants, Peter apparently lived in his own house, and Matthew had the means to give a large party to many friends (Mark 1:20. Luke 4:38; 5:29). — *Abbott.*

16. Simon. Short for Simeon, a Hebrew word meaning *hearing*. — *Cambridge Bible.* Peter. A Greek word meaning a rock, or stone. Galilee and the surrounding lands were remarkable for massive stone structures. The most conspicuous of these were sacred edifices — temples; and the foundation-stones of these temples were invariably large and imposing. It would be with a view to these large and conspicuous foundation-stones that our Lord would call Simon a stone. He was spiritually large and strong, massive and shapely, fit to constitute an important part of the substructure of the great spiritual temple of God (see Matt. 16:18). — *Morison.* Peter was born in Bethsaida near Capernaum; travelled much as a missionary, taking his wife with him (1 Cor. 9:5), and went as far East as Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13); and according to tradition he was crucified under Nero, with his head downward.

17. James. The same as Jacob, *supplanter*; the son of Zebedee and Salome (Matt. 27:56. Mark 15:40), a native of Bethsaida; commonly known as James "the Great,"

brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18. And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

of James; and them he surnamed Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

to distinguish him from James the son of Alphaeus; the first of the apostolic body to suffer martyrdom, and the only one of the twelve whose death is actually recorded in the New Testament. John (grace of the Lord) the brother of James. Author of the Gospel of John, three Epistles, and Revelation. He never in his Gospel calls himself by this name, but sometimes "*the disciple whom Jesus loved*" (John 13:23; 19:26), sometimes "*the other disciple*" (John 18:15; 20:2, 3). To him our Lord committed the care of his earthly mother. He had a pastoral supervision of some of the churches of Asia, especially Ephesus; was banished to Patmos by Domitian, A. D. 95; was recalled by Nerva, 96-98; and died a natural death in extreme old age. He surnamed them Boanerges. Boanerges is a transfer into Greek of an Aramaic word, which was modified from the Hebrew, meaning sons of thunder. It is evident that the name was a title of honor, and could not therefore, as some assume, indicate serious faults of character. — Cook. It seems to have been occasioned by their "*vehement and zealous*" disposition, as indicated in Luke 9:54. Comp. Mark 9:38." This does not imply censure; for these traits, when sanctified, would be praiseworthy. John was not, as he is often portrayed, of a soft and almost effeminate disposition. Such neutral characters are rarely heroes of faith. — Schaff. It is, however, far more likely that there is a simple reference, in the surname, to some deep-toned peculiarity of voice which was characteristic of the brothers, and which would eminently fit them, when engaged in addressing their fellow-men, for rolling in on the mind and heart, with awe-inspiring effect, the solemnities of religion. — Morison.

18. Andrew (manly). A son of Jonas, and brother of Peter, a native of Bethsaida. Tradition reports him to have preached the gospel in Scythia, Greece, and Asia Minor, and to have been crucified upon a cross in the form of a X, which is called, accordingly, St. Andrew's cross. — Abbott. Philip (warlike). He was a native of Bethsaida, and brought Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:43-45). Of his life and labors nothing else is known. He must be distinguished from Philip the deacon (Acts 6:5; 8:5-12). Bartholomew; i.e., Bar-Tolmai, the "*son of Tolmai*," and probably identical with Nathanael = "*gift of God*." For (1) St. John twice mentions Nathanael, never Bartholomew (John 1:45; 21:2); (2) the other Evangelists all speak of Bartholomew, never of Nathanael; (3) Philip first brought Nathanael to Jesus, and Bartholomew is mentioned by each of the synoptic Evangelists immediately after Philip; (4) St. John couples Philip with Nathanael precisely in the same way that Simon is coupled with his brother Andrew. Respecting him, at least under the name Nathanael, we learn from the Gospels little more than (a) his birthplace, Cana of Galilee (John 21:2); (b) his simple, guileless character (John 1:47); and (c) that he was one of the seven to whom our Lord showed himself by the lake of Gennesaret after his resurrection (John 21:2). — Cambridge Bible. Matthew (gift of God). Called also Levi, son of Alphaeus; a publican, the author of the Gospel of Matthew. Of his life little is known (see Lesson IV., ver. 14). Thomas (twin). A Hebrew name, of which Didymus is the Greek equivalent (John 11:16). There are but four incidents in his life recorded in the New Testament (John 11:16; 14:5; 20:24-29; 21:2). These indicate that he possessed an affectionate spirit but a sceptical mind. The earnestness and fidelity of his love was unaccompanied by a faith and hope at all comparable to it (John 11:16). Of his history subsequent to the ascension of Christ, nothing is known with any certainty: the Syrian Christians, however, claim him as the founder of their Church. — Abbott. James the son of Alphaeus. Called Cleopas or Clopas, in John. He was called James the Less, or Younger, to distinguish him from James the brother of John. His mother's name was Mary (Mark 15:40). The weight of opinion favors the view that the apostle was a different person from "James the brother of our Lord," who was pastor of the church in Jerusalem, and author of the Epistle of James. In this case nothing more is known of the life of the apostle James. Thaddeus. Called Lebbeus in Matt. 10:4, and Judas, or Jude, in Luke 6:16. Acts 1:13, the (son or) brother of James, and the author of the book of Jude. (Though some think him to be a different person from the author of that book, and from the Judas mentioned in Matt. 13:55.) Simon the Canaanite. There is no reference to the people called Canaanites, nor to the town of Cana. The Aramaean original is *Canaanæan* (as in the Revised Version), meaning Zealot, and is translated by Luke *Zelotes*, zealot. Before his conversion Simon belonged to the Zealots, an extreme political party among the Jews. — somewhat corresponding to the

19. And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him : and they went into a house. | and Judas Iscariot, which also 19 betrayed him.

Fenians in Ireland, — who were determined on no account to acquiesce in the Roman rule. They were persuaded that any public or private measures or acts, however bloody or revolutionary, which were intended and fitted, either to break down or to embarrass the dominion of the Romans, or of any other heathen, within the Holy Land, were not only legitimate, but meritorious. They played in subsequent times a terrible part in connection with the "reign of terror" that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, from the fourth book onward.) — *Morison*.

19. Judas Iscariot. The derivation of this name is uncertain: it is probably *Of Kerieth*, a town of Judea (Josh. 15:25). In that case, Judas Iscariot was the only Judean among the twelve; and this fact would afford a key to his enigmatical character and career. His father's name was Simon (John 6:71). He followed Christ with the other disciples, received from him a commission to preach the gospel, and apparently preached it, endowed with the same power to "heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease," was intrusted with the funds of the little band (which he misused), and adhered to Christ and his cause until the unmistakable declaration of Jesus respecting his death, when he deserted and betrayed him. — *Abbott*. Which also betrayed him. This is the black mark which distinguishes Judas from the other apostles, and from all men. It is the Cain-mark on his life, which nothing can hide or wash away. It is the brand of the *Scarlet Letter*. And they went into a house. The original is, they *went into house*, as we say *went into town*. The meaning is, that in process of time Jesus returns to Capernaum with his disciples, and they go into the house where he was accustomed to live when in that town. — *Morison*. Previous to going into town, however, he spoke to the disciples and the multitudes the *Sermon on the Mount*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

For the family of the apostles, see *Geikie's Life of Christ*, first part of chap. 35; *Beecher's*, 1:229; *Farrar's*, chap. 18. On James and John, Boanerges, see Nelson's sermon in *The National Preacher*, 35, on "The Gentleness and Energy of Christianity." On Judas, see *Abbott's Jesus of Nazareth*, chap. 29; and for illustrations of the abiding curse of Judas' sin, consult the character of Lady Macbeth in Shakspeare's *Macbeth*, and Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. For the training which Christ gives, see illustration in Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*, vol. 2, p. 114.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The beneficent work of Christ for men. In the volumes containing the United States census are a number of maps or charts showing, by means of varying shades of colors, the degrees in which various things pertaining to our country's welfare prevail in different parts of the land; as, for instance, wealth, ignorance, various diseases, different classes of the population. Now, if there were to be made two maps of the world, one showing the happiness, comforts, morality, good deeds, benevolent gifts, means of innocent enjoyment, the light shades showing the countries in which a large degree of happiness is enjoyed, and the shades growing darker as the blessings grow less; the other map showing the prevalence of Christianity, the lands where the purest Christianity is most prevalent being represented in white, and the shades darkening as the lands have a less pure Christianity, or it is less prevalent, down to the blackness of utter heathenism, — it would be found that these two maps almost exactly coincide. The more Christianity, the more happiness; and blessings lessen and sorrows multiply in proportion as there is less of the Christian religion. — *P*.

II. Trained in Christ's family. According to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the ancient Persian monarchs selected for the training of their princes the four best men in the kingdom, — the *wisest* man, the *most just* man, the *most temperate* man, and the *bravest* man, — that the princes under these might be best fitted to be kings and rulers. All these the disciples of Christ find united in their one Master, who is the wisest, most just, most temperate, and most brave being in the universe. And whosoever take him for their teacher will be fitted to be kings and priests in the kingdom of God. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 6. The greatest crimes may be committed by those most ready to censure others. — *Ryle*.

2. The enemies of religion forget their greatest differences in their opposition to Christ.

3. Vers. 7-11. Christ's work is to undo the evil which Satan does.

4. Blessings, healings, help for the needy, always accompany the presence of Christ and his religion.
5. Ver. 13. Prayer is the preparation for every great work, and precedes every marked epoch in the progress of Christianity.
6. Christ makes his own choice of his special workers.
7. Ver. 14. Faithful service in the past prepares us for closer communion with Christ, and larger spheres of usefulness.
8. The best possible training is from the companionship of Jesus.
9. The experience of God's work in the soul, the practical knowledge of religion, fits us to preach and teach.
10. Ver. 15. With the call to his work, Christ always gives the power to do the work.
11. Christians are to be Christ's representatives on earth, to carry on the work he began.
12. Ver. 19. We cannot escape from our deeds: the brand of unforgiven sin remains forever.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

To-day we consider **THE CALL TO CARRY ON THE BENEFICENT WORK OF CHRIST.**
 (1) In vers. 6-12 we find *what is the beneficent work of Christ on earth.* (2) *The call to enter upon that work,* vers. 13-14. (3) *We see that power to do the work is given with the call,* ver. 15. And (4) *we consider who are called,* vers. 16-19, and the great variety of workers needed in Christ's vineyard, each with his own work to do.

LESSON VII. — FEBRUARY 12.

CHRIST'S FOES AND FRIENDS. — MARK 3: 20-35.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He that is not with me is against me.* — MATT. 12: 30.

TIME. — Summer and autumn of A. D. 28. Ver. 20 belongs to the summer, and follows close after the last lesson and the Sermon on the Mount. The events of the rest of the lesson took place some weeks later, in the autumn.

PLACE. — Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 8: 5 and Luke 7: 1 are parallel with ver. 20. The charge that he was in league with Satan (vers. 21-30) is given more fully in Matt. 12: 22-45 (comp. Luke 11: 14-26). The visit of his mother and brethren (vers. 31-35) is recorded also in Matt. 12: 46-50, and Luke 8: 19-21.

HARMONY OF EVENTS. — As soon as Jesus had appointed the twelve apostles (Mark 3: 13-19), he preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. chaps. 5, 6, 7), and returned to Capernaum (Mark 3: 19), and healed the centurion's servant (Matt. 8: 5-13). Great crowds gathered around him on his return (Mark 3: 20). The next day he restores the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7: 11-17). While in this part of Galilee he answers the messengers of John (Matt. 11: 2-19. Luke 7: 18-35). Jesus dines with a Pharisee named Simon, and speaks the parable of the two debtors (Luke 7: 36-51). He continues his circuit of Galilee (Luke 8: 1-3). Returning to Capernaum, he cured one possessed of a demon, answered the Pharisees' accusation (Mark 3: 22-30), and the interference of his mother and brethren (Mark 3: 21, 31-35).

INTRODUCTION.

After Jesus had selected his twelve apostles, he instructed them and the multitudes in the principles of his kingdom, in what is called the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. chaps. 5, 6, 7). Then he descended to the shore, and returned to his home at Capernaum, followed by the multitudes as soon as they learned where he had gone.

20. And the multitude cometh together again,¹ so that they could not so much as eat bread.

And he cometh into a house. 20
 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat

¹ Chap. 6: 31.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Incessant Labors of Christ.** — Vers. 20, 21. 20. **The multitude cometh together again.** Christ had left them at the Mount of Beatitudes a short time

21. And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: ¹for they said, He is beside himself.

bread. And when his friends ²¹ heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. And the ²²

¹ John 7:5; 10:20.

before this. Now they assemble from all parts again, at his home in Capernaum. This verse probably describes not one occasion alone, but the general state of things at this period of his ministry. — *P.* Not so much as to eat bread. Food, their meals. The expression is peculiarly emphatic. They could not even secure for themselves such leisure as was needful for their meals. — *Morison.* There is nothing unreasonable if our *temporal* affairs sometimes give way to the higher interests of our own souls, and the souls of others. At the same time, it is true that religion is ordinarily consistent with a close attention to worldly business. It promotes industry, economy, order, neatness, and punctuality — all indispensable to worldly prosperity. — *Barnes.*

21. And when his friends. Not his disciples, but his relatives and family friends, including his mother and brethren (vers. 31-35). It is very remarkable, it is even startling, that among these relatives of Christ, who came to lay hands on him as being insane, his mother is found. We may suppose that what is imputed to the kinsmen or family of Christ is spoken of them as a body, from which Mary is to be excepted. She may have accompanied her unbelieving friends without participating in their feelings, rather to act as a mediator between them and Jesus than to carry in any degree their views. It may be, too, a cloud of unbelief flitted over her mind, when she saw her Son taking a course unlike what she had attributed to the Messiah, and, overcome by her perplexities, she may not have known what to think of him. — *Pres. Woolsey, D.D.* It is even more likely that the reports which came to Mary's ears were garbled, and misrepresented the facts, so that Jesus appeared to her in a different light from what the Messiah *should appear*. — *P.* Heard of it. What they heard was, that he had been followed by immense multitudes, among whom a number of demoniacs were conspicuous; that he had formally appointed a company of attendants; and that on his return he was surrounded by the whole population. To understand their feelings we must bear in mind the personal want of faith of his brethren, and their jealousy and indignation, attested by St. John (chap. 7:3-9). They would also naturally inquire of those who came back from the Feast of Tabernacles, what impression had been made by him at Jerusalem, where he had gone eschewing their company. He had there been rejected and persecuted by the rulers, specially on the ground of his Galilean origin, and was regarded by many as a demoniac (cf. John 7:20, 41, 48, 52; 8:48, 25). — *Schaff.* They went out. Not from Capernaum, but from *Nazareth* their home. It was some 20 miles away. — *Meyer.* To lay hold on him. To put him under restraint; to force him to cease from his strange actions, and his untiring labors. He is beside himself. The insinuation that his brain was affected had reached his family, who still lived at Nazareth. The effects of the exhausting toil and constant excitement of these months had, apparently, led even his friends to fear that he would give way under such tension. Very possibly the simple household at Nazareth, who, like other Jews, must have looked on the rabbis with superstitious reverence, had innocently accepted the insinuation, that he was really out of his mind, as a result of being possessed. Prejudiced in favor of the common idea of the Messiah as a national hero, at the head of Jewish armies, they had not risen to any higher conception, and felt impelled by every motive to interfere, and, if possible, put a stop to what seemed to them an unaccountable course of action on his part. It was only about ten hours' distance from Nazareth to Capernaum, over the hills; they would go and see for themselves; and so Mary, and the brothers and sisters of Jesus — the whole household, for Joseph was dead — set out for Peter's house. — *Geikie.* They knew too much of his life and character to fall in with the opinion that he was possessed by an unclean spirit; but mental alienation was a less uncharitable assumption. — *Cook.* It may have been a mere pretext. As his enemies had already, in all probability, said that he was possessed, his relatives, from motives of policy, may have adopted this modification of the charge to get him away; with this, anxiety for his health may have entered as a motive. The context favors the thought that the motive was *policy* resulting from want of faith (John 7:3-5). Yet even among these relatives, there was probably a great variety of opinions regarding him. — *Schaff.* Are these not the types of the world still? Let a man show as much zeal in the service of God as one shows in the service of an earthly master, and thousands will say, "Much religion has made him mad." How strange it is that the world will bear with the most exalted enthusiasm in a patriot, with the most devoted enthusiasm in a statesman, with great enthusiasm in a philanthropist; but, the moment that the enthusiasm is trans-

22. ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, ¹He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23. ²And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the devils casteth he out the devils. And he called them ²³ unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a ²⁴ kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot

¹ Matt. 9:34; 10:25. Luke 11:15. John 7:20: 8:48, 52; 10:20. ² Matt. 12:25.

ferred to a subject worthy of its noblest fervor, then the world says that much religion has made you mad!—*John Cumming, D.D.* We now leave these friends on the way to Capernaum, and consider another charge against Jesus.

II. **Jesus' Answer to the Charge of being in League with Satan.**—Vers. 22-30.
22. The scribes which came down from Jerusalem. For it would appear that the great ecclesiastics in the capital were feeling uneasy in reference to the Galilean Reformer. It may be that these scribes were sent from Jerusalem, as the result of the consultation with the Herodians (Mark 3:6, — our last lesson), how they might destroy Jesus. Failing in their attempt to take him up for sabbath-breaking, they determine on this new and severer accusation.—*P. Down.* Jerusalem was perched on the summit of a broad mountain-ridge. The highest point of the city was more than 2,300 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. Hence people in all parts of the Holy Land spoke of *going up to Jerusalem*, and *coming down from it*.—*Morison.* Said. The occasion of their speaking was the casting a demon out of a man who was possessed of a blind and dumb unclean spirit (Matt. 12:22-24).—The words appear to have been whispered by the Pharisees among the people. They were not addressed to Jesus.—*Ellicott.* The Pharisees knew the miracle was a fact. They could not deny that, but they could try and explain it away. **He hath.** Is possessed by; under the control of. **Beelzebub.** All authorities agree that the reading here should be *Beelzebub*. Beelzebub or Baal-zebub (*lord of flesh, or of flies*) was a god of the Ekronites (Philistines; 2 Kings 1, 2). By the change of a single letter the Jews converted it into Baal or Beel-zebub (*lord of filth*), and applied it to the prince of devils.—*Abbott.* **By the prince of the devils.** They believed that the world of evil spirits, like that of the angels, formed a great army, in various divisions, each with its head and subordinates, its rank and file; the whole under the command of Satan. To Beelzebub was assigned the control of that division which inflicted disease of all kinds on man; and Jesus, they hinted, was playing a part under him in pretending to drive out devils from the sick, that he might win the people to listen to his pestiferous teaching. They would not admit that his power was divine; and the ideas of the times necessarily assumed that it must be the opposite. It was of no avail that light streamed in on them; for bigotry, like the pupil of the eye, contracts in proportion to the outward brightness.—*Geikie.*

23. He called them. Thus drawing their attention. **Said in parables.** Such as are recorded in vers. 24, 25, 27; Matt. 12:43-45. **How can Satan cast out Satan?** He does not mean, How can one Satan cast out another Satan? but, How can Satan cast out himself?—*Morison.* It is conceivable that Satan might cast out for once some inferior demon, in order to mislead and destroy the people, as in the case of the sons of the Pharisees (Matt. 12:27). But Jesus was in an entirely different position. His whole life and character, all his teachings, all his miracles, were exactly opposed to Satan. It was absurd to suppose that *he* could be in league with a being he forever opposed and fought.—*P.*

24. **If a kingdom be divided against itself.** There is at first sight a difficulty in the argument which our Saviour draws from the oneness of the kingdom of Satan; viz., that it seems the very idea of this kingdom that there should be *this anarchy*: blind rage and hate, not only against God, but each part of it warring against every other part. And this is most deeply true, that hell is as much in arms against itself as against heaven. Neither does our Lord deny that *in respect of itself* that kingdom is infinite contradiction and division, only he asserts that in relation to the kingdom of goodness it is at one. Just as a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heart-burnings; yet, if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity. When it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes.—*Trench.* We may observe (1) that our Lord here in the most solemn manner re-asserts and confirms the truths respecting the kingdom of evil which the Jews also held; (2) that our Lord here appeals, not to an *insulated case* of casting out devils, but to the general and uniform tenor of all such acts on his part, in which he was found as the continual adversary of the kingdom of Satan; (3) that our Lord proceeds to show that the axiom is true of all human societies, even to a family, the smallest.—*Alford.*

25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27. ¹No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

28. ²Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

stand. And if a house be 25 divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan hath risen up 26 against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. But no one can enter 27 into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto 28 you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But whosoever shall 29 blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin:

¹ Isa. 49:24. Matt. 12:29. ² Matt. 12:31. Luke 12:10. ¹ John 5:16.

25. If a house (household) be divided. The Saviour gives another and analogous parable, only shifting his scene to a smaller community.

26. If Satan rise up against himself. As is actually the case, provided the malicious imputation of the scribes be well founded. It is a most graphic picture. Satan rises up in all the panoply of his might to *put himself down!* — *Morison*. He cannot stand. If Satan should come into a compact with Christ, it must be to his own ruin; therefore it was the most absurd thing imaginable to think that Beelzebub should at all countenance such a design; if he should fall in with Christ, *how should then his kingdom stand?* — *Henry*. Has an end. The Saviour's conception of Satan does not confine itself to that of a personality. He pictures him as a power, a principality, a royalty, a kingdom. If, as such, he has been divided against himself, *he cannot stand, he has an end.* — *Morison*. He has an end as prince of evil, as ruler and king, for he has forsaken his kingdom.

27. No man can enter into a strong man's house. The strong man is Satan. The house is the region which is subject to him; i.e., either the world at large, or the spirits of individual men. The "binding of the strong man" is the check given to the tyranny of Satan by emancipating the possessed sufferers from their thralldom; the "spoiling of the house" implies the final victory over him. — *Ellicott*.

28. All sins shall be forgiven; i.e., there is forgiveness through repentance for all sins except the one which is about to be mentioned. Blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. The word "*blasphemy*" had a well-defined meaning to the Jews. It was the designation of a crime defined by statutes, and punishable by death. Under the theocracy Jehovah was King of the Jews. To do aught to diminish reverence and allegiance to him, was the blasphemy of the Old Testament, a crime answering to treason in our own times (for laws, see Exod. 20:1-7; 22:20. Deut. 13:1-5; 18:19, 20. Num. chap. 16; 20:7-12. 1 Kings 18). It was of this crime that Jesus was accused, and for it condemned by the Sanhedrim, because he assumed a divine character, and claimed divine honors (Matt. 26:63-66). — *Abbott*.

29. Blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness. Volumes have been written respecting this utterance of Christ. It has been variously defined as, persistent resistance to the influence of the Third Person of the Trinity; impious speaking against the Holy Ghost; attributing the works of God to Satan; a wanton and blasphemous attack on the divine nature and power of Christ; a contemptuous treatment of Christ, not as he then appeared in his humiliation, but as he was ere long to appear, when his mission and character should be attested by the Holy Ghost; not a particular act of sin, but a state of sin, a wilful, determined opposition to the blessed power of the Holy Spirit; not a sinful state of mind, but one great and deadly sin, which, when committed, renders forgiveness absolutely impossible. To a certain extent the sin appears to be left purposely undefined, the note of warning to be indefinite, that it may caution all against transgressing the bounds beyond which forgiveness never reclaims. In seeking to understand Christ's meaning, and governing ourselves by the canon, we are to understand him as he would expect to be understood by his auditors; the following facts are to be considered: (1) There is an unpardonable sin; a sin, be it act or state, for which there is no space for forgiveness. It is possible to go beyond the reach of God's mercy. (2) There are hints of such a sin elsewhere in the New Testament. The principal passages are the following: Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:15-17. 1 John 5:16. (3) Blasphemy among the Jews was a sin against God, answering to treason in our own times. (4) The warning here was uttered by Christ, not

30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.
 31. ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.
 32. And the multitude sat about him, and they said

because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.
 And there come his mother 31 and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Be-

¹ Matt 12:46. Luke 8:19.

to infidels and open opposers of the kingdom of God, but to the Pharisees, who claimed to be leaders in the Jewish theocracy. (5) I conclude, then, that, by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Christ's auditors would understand, not a hardness of heart, a state of wilful, determined, obdurate sin, though only out of this could it spring, nor every kind of evil speaking against either the Third Person in the Trinity or the divine nature and office of Christ; but *treason by professed members of the kingdom of God against the Spirit of God*, manifested in this instance by wilfully confounding the two kingdoms of good and evil, God and Satan, and attributing to the diabolical agency of the latter the blessed operations in merciful healing wrought by the former. But all wilful, wanton, determined opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit, either in others' hearts or our own, especially when engaged in by those who profess allegiance to the Holy Ghost, approximates this sin. — *Abbott*. The Devil hath added this lie to those which he hath told before, in persuading thee that thou hast committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. For that sin is ever attended with these two symptoms [(1) absence of all contrition, and (2) of all desire of forgiveness]. Now, if thou canst truly say that thy sins are a burden to thee, that thou dost desire forgiveness, be of good comfort: thou hast not yet, and by God's grace never shall, commit that unpardonable offence. — *Thomas Fuller*. **Hath never forgiveness.** The peculiarity of this crime arises from its relation to the dispensation of mercy. It is the only crime, which, in its own nature, closes the door of the soul, and keeps it closed, against the ingress of Divine Mercy. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of the propitioussness of God; and when, as such, he is blasphemed, or scorned, or slighted, the only possible means of the soul's acquaintance with the mercy of God is set aside or resisted. — *Morison*. **Is in danger of eternal damnation.** Better, as in the *Revised*, guilty of an *eternal sin*, i.e., of one which will, with its consequences, extend through the ages. — *Ellicott*. Our Lord intimates to his slanderers that they were treading close on the borders of the sin that hath never forgiveness. They were on its brink. Another step, and they might topple irretrievably into the abyss. It was within the limits of possibility to reject Jesus of Nazareth and yet believe in a Propitiator to come as revealed by the Holy Spirit of God. But if they proceeded to reject the Holy Spirit himself, they would thereby reject every possible element of divine evangelism, and there would no avenue remain by which saving and sanctifying influences could enter their souls. — *Morison*. The unpardonable sin, though it may begin with one act of blasphemy (ver. 30), results in a state of sinful activity which continues forever. For this reason it is unpardonable. The punishment is perpetual, because the sin is perpetual. The sin excludes pardon, because it excludes repentance. The remark of Matthew refers to the guilt, that of Mark to the sin itself, explaining the former. This is the most fearful aspect of eternal punishment; namely, being forever deprived of the needed influences of the Holy Spirit, and hence in a state of eternally growing sin and guilt. Conscious existence is evidently implied by the word chosen. Further, while the next verse suggests a particular form of the unpardonable sin, this phrase favors the view that it is an active state rather than a particular act. — *Schaff*.

30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. This does not necessarily define the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but certainly indicates its character. Even if these accusers had not committed it, their language tended in that direction. They had attributed to an evil spirit what was the work of the Holy Spirit, — that, too, in presence of sufficient evidence of its true character. — *Schaff*.

III. **Who are Christ's Relatives?** — Vers. 31-35. 31. There came then his brethren. The Evangelist, having left, as it were, the Saviour's kinsfolk on the road between Nazareth and Capernaum (see ver. 21), rejoins them on their arrival. Mary and the brothers and sisters of Jesus — the whole household (for Joseph was dead) — had come the ten-hours' journey between the two towns, to see, for themselves, if Jesus were indeed beside himself; and had just now arrived. **Standing without.** Either outside of the house, or more probably beyond the circle of his hearers, in the open air. — *Alexander*. **Sent unto him.** No doubt by passing the message from man to man until it reached him, which they could not do themselves from the extent and pressure of the crowd. — *Alexander*.

32. They said unto him. We are led in spirit into the assembly, and see and hear

unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34. And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

hold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking 34 round on them which sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the 35 will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

as if we had been really present. One would whisper the message to another, and it would be transmitted round and round even while our Saviour was speaking. At length, at some pause or break in the discourse, some one would muster courage to repeat it aloud. — *Morison*. Behold, thy mother and thy brethren. It is a point of controversy whether these brethren were (1) the own brothers of Jesus, sons of Joseph and Mary; or (2) sons of Joseph by a former marriage; or (3) cousins, sons of a sister of Mary. They were James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55). — *Rev. A. Carr*.

33. Who is my mother, or my brethren? Our Lord takes occasion from this incident to teach them that his relative position in society was wholly different from that of others; his domestic ties, though real, being as nothing in comparison with those which bound him to his spiritual household. This is the meaning of the question here recorded: "Do you think that my condition is the same as yours, and that the wishes of my mother and my brothers are as binding upon me as those of your own households are and ought to be on you?" The contemptuous meaning put by some upon the words, as if he had intended to say, What are they to me? or, What care I for them? is wholly foreign from the text and context. — *Alexander*.

34. Looked on them which sat about Him. Literally, "on those who were sitting about him in a circle:" the words denote the inner circle of his disciples, the twelve of course, others, it may be, with them, but none save those whom he knew and trusted. The scribes were near at hand. He had lately addressed them, but they did not now form part of the inner circle in the presence-chamber of Messiah. — *Cook*. Behold my mother and brethren, pointing to his disciples (Matt. 12:49). He did in no wise deny the value of the earthly relationship. We know how he loved his mother, by his care for her even on the cross. But there was a higher relationship. — *P*. "For whosoever shall do the will of God," etc. If any one do the will of God, and be thus God-like in character, holy in spirit, in him does the Saviour recognize, in relation to himself, the source of all true kinship. He is at once his "brother and sister and mother." The deepest affinity is that of the spirit. Hence the supremacy, even in the present provisional state of things, of the wedlock relationship. It is noteworthy that Jesus does not add "father" to his "brother and sister and mother." A high and hallowed consciousness kept back that august term. He realized that his relation to his real and only Father towered far aloft above all other relations. — *Morison*. The same is my brother, etc., because born of the same Father (John 3:3, 5); because like Jesus in nature; because a more than brotherly affection arises between them. How much is involved in this relationship with Jesus! By it we become children and heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. We can inherit from our good parents three things: (1) a nature, tendencies toward good, possibilities of great usefulness and happiness. (2) We may inherit possessions, their wealth, rank, home. (3) We inherit the love and care and training of a good home. All these in an infinite degree we inherit from our Father, if we are the brothers and sisters of Christ; a pure and holy nature, capable of infinite blessedness; all the wealth of heaven, as our home so perfect, so beautiful, so rich in every good; and the personal care and love of God himself. — *P*. And mother. Expressing the tenderest, purest, and deepest love on earth, the very ideal and type of love. With such affection are the disciples of Jesus bound together with him, — an affection which can be expressed only by the dearest and holiest ties.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On blasphemy, see Abbott's *Jesus of Nazareth*, chap. 35. Geikie's *Life of Christ*, chap. 41; President Woolsey's *Religion of the Present and Future*, "Christ charged with being beside himself;" H. W. Beecher's *Sermons*, series 3, "The Sin against the Holy Ghost;" Muller's *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, vol. ii., bk. 5, p. 475; *Sermons* by Saurin, and by W. Jay, on "The Family of Jesus Christ." For illustrations, see, in *Schönberg-Cotta Family*,

the story of Christoforus serving the strongest; the tract, *On which Side of the Line*; Prescott's *Conquest of Peru* (1 : 263), Pizarro's drawing a line on the sand; Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worshippers*, p. 53, Mahomet and his friends, — dividing his friends from others.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **He is beside himself.** In the history of the American revival we have read of a little maiden who besought everybody she met to love Jesus. When people told her she was crazy, she simply yet beautifully replied, "But, if I am crazy, that is no reason why you should not love Jesus." — *Biblical Museum*.

II. **The unpardonable sin.** A man may misuse his eyes, and yet see; but whosoever puts them out can never see again. One may misdirect his mariner's compass, and turn it aside from the north pole by a magnet or piece of iron, and it may recover and point right again; but whosoever destroys the compass itself has lost his guide at sea. So it is possible for us to sin and be forgiven: recovery through God's Spirit is not impossible. But if we so harden our hearts that they cannot feel the power of the Spirit, who alone can convert us, if the eyes of the soul are destroyed, then there is no hope. We are beyond the reach of the only power that can save us. — *P.*

III. The same truth is illustrated by Southey's poem, *The Inchcape Rock*. The "holy abbot of Aberbrothock" had placed a bell over this rock, in such a way that it was rung by the motion of the waves.

"When the rock was hid by the tempest's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell."

One day Ralph the Rover, in sport, "cut the warning bell from its float," and "sailed away, and scoured the seas for many a day." Returning richly laden, he finds himself near the Scottish shore, in a fog and the swell of a gale.

"Canst hear, says one, the breakers' roar?
For yonder, methinks, should be the shore.
Now where we are, I cannot tell,
But I wish we could hear the Inchcape bell."

But they hear no sound, and soon are wrecked upon the very rock from which they had destroyed the warning bell. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 21. Even good men may misunderstand and misinterpret an excellent character.
2. Christ's life has done much to show that true enthusiasm in the cause of God is truly reasonable. — *President Woolsey*.
3. It is a little matter if we are misunderstood, so long as God understands us. — *W.*
4. Ver. 22. How difficult bad men find it to comprehend the aims and plans of a person of uncommon goodness, for they will impute to the best conduct of the best men motives as base as their own. — *W.*
5. Ver. 23. The truth is often most effective when enforced by good illustrations.
6. Ver. 25. We learn how important it is for Christians to be united in heart and work.
7. Vers. 28, 29. There is a sin which cannot be forgiven.
8. Be very careful not to resist the influences of the Holy Spirit.
9. Ver. 31. We must do our duty, no matter how much our friends may oppose.
10. Vers. 33-35. Spiritual relationship is the nearest of all ties, and renders all natural bonds of affection doubly dear.
11. All true Christians are brothers and sisters of Christ, and heirs with him of God his father. His riches are their riches; his joys, their joys; his character, their character; his home, their home.
12. Jesus loves us with a love deeper, tenderer, stronger, more enduring, than a mother's love.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this lesson we have the FRIENDS AND FOES OF JESUS DESCRIBED. (1) *His friends misunderstanding him* (vers. 20, 21); as we are often misunderstood by our best friends. (2) *His foes imputing wrong motives to him* (vers. 22-27). (3) *The sin and punishment of his foes* (vers. 28-30); distinguishing clearly what is and what is not the unpardonable sin. (4) *The nearness to Christ of his friends* (vers. 31-35); a nearness which can be expressed only by the most endearing relationships.

LESSON VIII. — FEBRUARY 19.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER. — MARK 4: 1-20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* — REV. 2: 29.

TIME. — Autumn, A. D. 28. Probably on the afternoon of the same day as the last lesson (Matt. 13: 1).

PLACE. — By the Sea of Galilee, probably near Capernaum.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 13: 1-23. Luke 8: 4-18.

INTRODUCTION.

The eager multitude, augmented by others who had come in from the neighboring towns, had now become so large, that, as it would seem, for the sake of more conveniently addressing them, our Lord was pleased to go on board one of the fishing-vessels, and thence with the multitude before him, and with his divine eyes perchance resting on some one of those patches of varied and undulating cornfields which modern travellers have noticed as in some cases on the very margin of the lake, with the earthly and the heavenly harvest-field thus alike before him, he delivered to that listening concourse the wondrous series of parables (eight in number) beginning with that appropriately chosen subject specified by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, — the sower and the seed. — *Ellicott.* Matthew's report of these parables is the fullest; several of the parables are given only by him; but Mark gives one omitted by the others (Mark 4: 26-29). — *Abbott.* These parables are clearly indicated to have been all spoken on *one and the same occasion* (see Matt. 13: 53), and form indeed a complete and glorious whole in their inner and deeper sense. The *first five* of these parables appear to have been spoken to the multitude from the ship (the interpretation of the parable of the sower being interposed); the *last three*, to the disciples in the house. — *Alford.* These parables have the common subject of the "kingdom of heaven," its nature and progress.

1. And ¹he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2. And he taught them many things by parables,² and said unto them in his doctrine,

And again he began to teach ¹ by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land. And he taught them many ² things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,

¹ Matt. 13: 1. Luke 8: 4. ² Chap. 12: 38.

EXPLANATORY.

1. And he began again. It was *again* that he *began*. He had taught by the same place before (see chap. 3: 7-9). He spoke again and again and again words of grace: he performed again and again and again works of mercy. — *Morison.* To teach by the sea side. By the side of the lake of Gennesaret, the lovely "Sea of Galilee." Gathered unto him a great multitude. Lit., "greatest." There is every reason to believe that this was the greatest. It was the *turning-point in his public teaching*, since the parabolic instruction now begins. — *Schaff.* A ship. Or, better, into a boat. Probably the one provided for this purpose (see chap. 3: 9). Sat in the sea. The great Rabbi, according to the universal custom of the rabbis, sat as he taught. He sat "in the sea." The boat in which he sat was *aft in the sea*. — *Morison.* The boat was small; and his position was near the surface of the water, the audience being slightly elevated above him. This is the best way of arranging an audience, but the world seems to have discovered it quicker than the Church. — *Schaff.* At the north end of the lake of Gennesaret, there are small creeks or inlets, where the ship could ride in safety only a few feet from the shore, and where the multitudes seated on both sides and before the boat could listen without distraction or fatigue. As if on purpose to furnish seats, the shores on both sides of these narrow inlets are piled up with smooth bundles of basalt. — *Thomson: Land and Book.*

3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow;

4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

Hearken: Behold, the sower 3 went forth to sow: and it came 4 to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. And other fell on the 5 rocky ground, where it had not much earth: and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and 6 when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And other fell among the 7 thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And others 8

2. He taught them . . . by parables. Thus presenting his teaching in a form which was at once more attractive, less open to attack, better as an intellectual and spiritual training for his disciples, better also as a test of character, and therefore an education for the multitude. — *Ellicott*. See on ver. 11. In his doctrine: teaching.

I. The Parable of the Sower. — Vers. 3-8. 3. Behold, there went out a sower to sow. It is the sower in the original. The Saviour casts upon the canvas of the imagination a particular individual. — *Morison*. "Behold, a sower went out." The expression implies that the sower, in the days of our Saviour, lived in a hamlet, or village, as all these farmers now do, to guard against robbers; that he did not sow near his own house, or in a garden fenced or walled, for such a field does not furnish all the basis of the parable. There are neither roads, nor thorns, nor stony places in such lots. They go forth into the open country, where the path passes through the cultivated land, where there are no fences, where thorns grow in clumps all around, where the rocks peep out in places through the scanty soil, and hard by are patches extremely fertile. — *Thomson: Land and Book*, 1: 116.



A SOWER.

4. As he sowed. The seed-time in Palestine is usually in October, about the time when this parable was spoken. Sowing is always done by hand: the ground is first scratched with a plough, which runs about four inches deep; the seed is sometimes covered with a harrow, sometimes trodden in by the feet of animals. — *Abbott*. Fell by the wayside. Where the

field and the road join, — the edge of the field which the plough had not turned up; or, rather, along the narrow trodden foot-path through the fields, which has no hedge or fence to separate it from the sown fields. Fowls. Small birds. Came and devoured. Our horses are actually trampling down some seeds which have fallen by this wayside, and larks and sparrows are busy picking them up. — *Land and Book*.

5. Stony ground. Places where the underlying rock was barely covered with earth. — *Carr*. The rock presented an impassable barrier, rendering it wholly impossible that the roots should penetrate beyond a certain depth, or draw up any supplies of nourishment from beneath. — *Trench*. It is not expected by the farmer that any thing sown upon it will come to full maturity. But the place comes within his sweep, as he sows the grain; and so some seeds fall upon it. — *Morison*.

5, 6. Immediately it sprang up. It sprang up sooner than the rest because the dry underlying rock drew the heat of the sun, and warmed the seed into earlier life. — *P*. And, while the rock below hindered it from striking deeply downward, it put forth its energies the more luxuriantly in the stalk. — *Trench*. No root . . . withered away. It was not rooted in that deep, moist soil which would have enabled it to resist the scorching heat of the sun; and, being smitten by that, it withered and died. — *Trench*.

7. Fell among thorns: more literally, into the thorns. He was thinking of some

8. And other fell on good ground,¹ and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10. ² And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. And he said, 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And when he was alone, 10 they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the

¹ John 15: 5. Col. 1: 6. ² Matt. 13: 10. Luke 8: 9, etc.

clump of thorny plants which had been burnt down according to Oriental custom, but not eradicated, before seed-sowing time. In among these roots some seeds fell. (See Illustrative I.) **Thorns grew up . . . choked it;** or, as Wycliffe renders it, *strangled it*. The thorns suffocated the growing plant, compressing it together, and thus preventing it from getting the free air and sunshine of heaven, and a sufficiency of the nourishment of the soil. — *Morison*. The thorns overtopped the good seed, and thus they pined and dwindled in the shade. Here there was no lack of soil: it might be good soil, but what was deficient was a careful husbandry (light and air). — *Trench*.

8. **Fell on good ground.** The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils: from its softness and tenderness, receiving and cherishing the seed; from its depth, allowing it to take firm root, and not quickly losing its moisture; and from its cleanness, giving its whole vigor and sap to the plant. — *J. F. and B.* **Some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred.** Thirtyfold is now really a first-rate crop, even for such plains as Esdraelon, just below Nazareth. But in the time of Christ there might be realized, in favorable circumstances, a hundred-fold. Intelligent gentlemen (in the plain of Esdraelon) maintain that they have themselves reaped more than an hundred-fold. Moreover, the different kinds of fertility may be ascribed to different kinds of grain: barley yields more than wheat; and white maize, sown in the neighborhood, often yields several hundred-fold. An extraordinary number of stalks do actually spring from a single root. Here, on this plain of Sidon, I have seen more than a hundred, and each with a head bowing gracefully beneath the load of well-formed grains. The yield was more than a thousand-fold. — *Land and Book*, 1: 116, 117. Observe the four kinds of seed: the first did not spring up at all; the second sprang up, but soon withered away; the third sprang up and grew, but yielded no fruit; the fourth sprang up, grew, and brought forth fruit: and as there are three causes of unfruitfulness, so there are three *degrees* of fruitfulness, but only one *cause* of fruitfulness. — *Maclear*.

9. **He that hath ears to hear.** This usually follows an important statement, intimating that he who has the discernment to understand will find the deeper meaning. — *Schaff*. Christ assumes that all without exception have been divinely provided with fitting organs of hearing; and he draws attention to the fact of the provision in a way that is calculated to lead each individual to reflect on his individual responsibility. It is quite a common phenomenon among men, to misuse the ears, so as not to hear the still, small voices that speak the most important truth. — *Morison*.

II. **Why Christ taught in Parables.** — Vers. 9-12. **10. When he was alone.** This refers to a temporary withdrawal, when his disciples "came" to him (Matthew); for he evidently spoke further to the multitude (Matt. xiii. 24-35). — *Schaff*. After Jesus had spoken the parable of the sower, he paused a while to give his hearers time to reflect. If the twelve were with him in the boat, by withdrawing a little way from the shore they would be strictly alone. — *Andrews*. Or the explanation may have been later, after he had returned to the house. **They that were about him with the twelve.** No doubt there would be frequently in the presence of our Lord other attached disciples besides the apostles, and these are here referred to. **Asked of him the parables.** Matthew says more definitely:



THORNS.

11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto¹ them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables:

12. ²That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

parables. And he said unto ¹¹ them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they ¹² may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them. And he saith unto them, ¹³ Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the

¹ 1 Cor. 5: 12. Col. 4: 5. 1 Thess. 4: 12. 1 Tim. 3: 7. ² Isa. 6: 9. Matt. 13: 14. Luke 8: 10. John 12: 40. Acts 28: 26. Rom. 11: 8.

"Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" and Luke: "What might this parable be?" The answer in all three accounts is: *first*, a reason why he thus taught, and, *secondly*, the exposition of this particular parable. Both questions must have been asked, as is implied in the indefinite statement of this verse. — *Schaff*.

11. Unto you it is given. To you who thus inquire, seeking to know the truth. That is the criterion. All who ask receive, and according to what they ask: the disciples ask what is the inner meaning. — *Cook*. "To you" is emphatic. A gift of God is here said to be bestowed on one class of hearers (you), and not on another (them). — *Schaff*. To know the mystery. Not a truth which none can understand, something "awfully obscure," but one which, kept a secret from others, has been revealed to the initiated. — *Ellicott*. The new ideas of the kingdom of heaven, hitherto unknown, but now being revealed by Christ, of immortality, forgiveness, true piety, and morality, — God's way of redeeming men. (See Rom. 16: 25.) Of the kingdom of God. The new kingdom which Christ came to establish on earth. Unto them that are without. Outside the circle of discipleship. — *Morison*. Who are without the kingdom; who refuse to be governed by its law, and adopt its principles of right and love. These things are done in parables. The method of instruction by parables was peculiarly adapted to their state. It was interesting, and would excite attention, and many of the similes would be long remembered, and their true meaning would insensibly break forth upon their minds. It would lead them to some correct views before they were aware. At the same time the truths thus delivered were covered by a thin veil, and were not immediately apprehended: thus, while instant rejection might be the result of presenting the naked truth, attention to the truth was secured by the interesting covering under which it was couched. — *Ripley*. He spake only in parables to these Jewish cavillers, in order to take from them the means of knowing truths which they would merely abuse. He would not cast pearls before swine. — *Binney*. Did he speak in parables because he did not wish them to *know* and to *enjoy*? Every thing the reverse. But he was aware, that, in consequence of the inveteracy of their prepossessions, they could not, in the first instance, *see* "the secret of the kingdom" without being repelled in spirit, and confirmed in their dissent and dislike. He wished, therefore, that they should not "see." But, at the same time, he graciously wished that they should "look," and keep "looking," so that they might, if possible, get such a glimpse of the inner glory as might fascinate their interest and attention, and by and by disarm their prejudices, so that they might with safety be permitted to "see." — *Morison*.

12. That. Not in order that, but because that; as the best method for such. — *Genius of the Gospel*. Seeing they may see, and not perceive. St. Mark characteristically gives the words of Isa. 6: 9, but not as a quotation. It is because they are already so blind, that he thus teaches. He gives parables, not to *produce* moral obliquity, but because moral obliquity existed. — *Thomas*. They have the faculties and opportunities of understanding gospel truths, but do not rightly improve them, because they do not desire to know (Job 21: 14, 15), They love darkness rather than light. — *Binney*. Though they see the truth intellectually, they shall not appreciate it spiritually: they see it as the horse sees the same prospect with his rider, without appreciation. — *Abbott*. But their position was according to their own choice: Christ forbade none; and the disciples in this case were not merely the twelve chosen by him, but all who would come. — *Anon*. May hear and not understand; i.e., with the heart. Lest . . . they should be converted. His meaning is not, These things are done in parables, lest they should be converted; but, Their eyes they have closed, etc., lest at any time they should be converted. That is, men wilfully close their hearts to the truth, lest they should be led to repentance and reformation. They *will* not, therefore they *can* not. — *Lange*. Moral unwillingness, resulting in moral inability. — *Schaff*.

14. ¶ ¹The sower soweth the word.

15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

parables? The sower soweth ¹⁴ the word. And these are ¹⁵ they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. And ¹⁶ these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway

¹ Matt. 13: 19.

13. Know ye not this parable? An answer to the second question, implied in ver. 10. It is not a reproof, but means: "You find you cannot understand this without assistance." The next question, and how then will ye know all parables? extends the thought to all parables, but intimates further: "The first parable of the kingdom is the basis of all the rest. If they understand not this, they could not understand any that followed. If they had the explanation of this, they had the key for the understanding of all others." Hence our Lord gives, not rules of interpretation, but examples, one of which is here preserved to be our guide in interpretation. — *Schaff*.

III. The Explanation of the Parable. — Vers. 13-20. 14. The sower. This is applicable to (1) Christ, who came forth "from the Father, and was come into the world;" (2) his apostles; (3) all who go forth in his name and with his authority. — *Maclear*. Soweth. (Luke says, "The seed is the word of God.") Sowing the seed means preaching the word, or teaching it in any way. — *Bourdillon*. The word; i.e., spiritual truth concerning the kingdom of heaven. — *Cook*. Whether spoken as by Christ and his apostles, or written as in the New Testament, and in books of interpretation and of spiritual application. All spiritual life depends on a divine seed sown in the heart by the divine Sower. The life of the seed depends on, first, receiving it; second, rooting it; third, cultivating it. — *Abbott*.

15. These are they by the way side. These are they in whose case the seed was sown by the wayside. — *Lange*. The wayside hearers are the wholly worldly, who, utterly unsusceptible, reject the truth without ever comprehending it at all. — *Neander*. Those who never allow the word to get under the surface of their thoughts. The way is the heart, beaten and dried by the passage of evil thoughts. — *H. de S. Victore*. Sin has so hardened the heart, worldliness has so deadened the feelings, sinful pleasures and desires have so dulled the conscience, that God's truth makes no impression, more than a passing dream, or a pleasant song, to be heard and forgotten. — *P*. Where the word is sown. The seed is good: "The word of God is quick and powerful;" that is, it "is living, and puts forth energy." The fault lies not in the seed. — *Arnot*. Satan cometh immediately. Matthew, "the wicked one;" Luke, "the devil." Being spoken of in the explanation of the parable, or in a didactic way, Satan must be a real personal being, and not merely the symbol of evil. — *Schaff*. Observe that in the parable it is the fowls of the air which carry away the seed, and that in the application Christ imputes those wandering thoughts, which do the work of truth-robbers, to the Evil One whose agents and instruments they are. — *Abbott*. Taketh away. "Snatches" (Matt. 13: 19). It is done in a moment, — by a smile at the end of the sermon; by a silly criticism at the church-door; by foolish gossip on the way home. These are "the fowls of the air" whom the Evil One uses in this task. — *Far-rar*. The Wicked One — afraid of losing a victim by his "believing to salvation" (Luke 8: 12) — finds some frivolous subject by whose greater attractions to draw off the attention, and straightway it is gone. Of how many hearers of the word is this the graphic but painful history! — *J. F. and B*. Wherever there is a preacher in the pulpit, there is a devil among the pews, busy watching the words that fall from the speaker's lips to catch them away. — *Guthrie*. That was sown in their hearts. The object of the preaching of the word is to save souls: the aim of Satan is to destroy souls. The word lies there ready for him. It has not pierced the soil of the heart. It has found no entrance. It is all on the surface. It lies quite naked and exposed. The word has been heard, and that is all. It is snatched away at once. — *Bourdillon*. In their hearts. A transient impression on the affections appears to be recognized, even in this class of hearers. — *Abbott*.

16. They which are sown on stony ground. Under the figure of the stony ground, he depicts that lively but shallow susceptibility of spirit which grasps the truth eagerly, but receives no deep impressions, and yields as quickly to the re-action of worldly temptations as it had yielded to the divine word. — *Neander*. Those whose feelings are touched, but not their conscience or their will. Immediately. The seed in such case "springs up" — all the quicker from the shallowness of the soil — "because it has no depth of earth." —

17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19. And the cares of this world,¹ and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

receive it with joy; And they 17 have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. And others are they 18 that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, and 19 the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they that were 20 sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

¹ 1 Tim. 6: 9, 17.

J. F. and B. Receive it with gladness; or joy, as in Matthew. The transient glow of quick emotion is often the sign of a shallow nature, not of deep feeling. — *Abbott*. True joy is a grave thing. — *Seneca*. The hearer described has not counted the cost: whatever was fair and beautiful in Christianity, as it first presents itself, had attracted him, — its sweet and comfortable promises, the moral loveliness of its doctrines, but not its answer to the deepest needs of the human heart; as neither, when he received the word with gladness, had he contemplated the having to endure hardness in his warfare with sin and Satan and the world. — *Trench*.

17. Have no root in themselves. The "root" is obviously the conviction which ripens into a purpose, and strikes its fibres deep down into reason, conscience, and will. — *Ellicott*. The professed disciple never fails because of his circumstances, but always because *the root is not in him*. — *Abbott*. When affliction or persecution. In the Revised, *tribulation*, i.e., threshing; those trials which are very severe, but only to remove the chaff from our souls and from the Church. — *P.* As the heat scorches the blade which has no deepness of earth, so the troubles and afflictions, which would have strengthened a true faith, cause a faith which was merely temporary to fail. The image has a peculiar fitness and beauty, for as the roots of a tree are out of sight, yet from them it derives its firmness and stability, so upon the hidden life of the Christian his firmness and stability depend. — *Trench*. A sneer from some leading spirit in a literary society, or a laugh raised by a gay circle of pleasure-seekers in a fashionable drawing-room, or the rude jests of scoffing artisans in a workshop, may do as much as the fagot and the stake to make a fair but false disciple deny his Lord. — *Arnot*. Beware of driving too furiously at first setting out. Take the cool of the day. Begin as you can hold on. Endeavor to hit the just medium, so as neither to make too much haste nor too little speed; neither to loiter, nor to run yourself out of breath. — *Toplady*. Are offended; or, take offence, and fall away from the truth; fall into sin. — *Robinson's Greek Lex.* See an instance in John 6: 66.

18. Sown among thorns. The seed which takes root, but is stifled by the thorns that shoot up with it, figures the mind in which the elements of worldly desire develop themselves along with the higher life, and at last become strong enough to crush it, so that the received truth is utterly lost. — *Neander*. The evil here is neither a hard nor a shallow soil — there is *softness* enough, and *depth* enough; but it is the existence in it of what draws all the moisture and richness of the soil away to itself, and so *starves the plant*. — *J. F. and B.*

19. Cares of this world. What are these thorns? First, "the cares of this world," — anxious, unrelaxing attention to the business of this present life; second, "the deceitfulness of riches," — of those riches which are the fruit of this worldly "care;" third, "the pleasures of this life," — the enjoyments, in themselves it may be innocent, in which worldly prosperity enables one to indulge. These "*choke*" or "*smother*" the word; drawing off so much of one's attention, absorbing so much of one's interest, and using up so much of one's time, that only the dregs of these remain for spiritual things, and a fagged, hurried, and heartless formalism is at length all the religion of such persons. — *J. F. and B.* Our Saviour here places *riches* in the midst, between *cares* and *pleasures*; for cares generally precede the gaining of riches, and, when gained, they draw men into pleasures and indulgences. — *Dodd*. Care has precisely the same effect on the heart as riches; clinging to the things of earth keeps the poor as well as the rich from coming to Christ. — *Gerlach*.

20. Some on good ground, etc. A heart soft and tender, stirred to its depths on the great things of eternity, and jealously guarded from worldly engrossments, such only is the

"*honest and good heart*" (Luke 8:15), which "*keeps*," i.e., "*retains*," the seed of the word, and bears fruit just in proportion as it is such a heart. Such "bring forth fruit with *patience*" (ver. 15), or continuance, "enduring to the end;" in contrast with those in whom the word is "choked," and brings no fruit to *perfection*. The "thirty-fold" is designed to express the *lowest* degree of fruitfulness; the "hundred-fold," the *highest*; and the "sixty-fold" the *intermediate* degrees of fruitfulness. As a "hundred-fold," though not unexampled (Gen. 26:12), is a rare return in the natural husbandry, so the highest degrees of spiritual fruitfulness are too seldom witnessed. — *J. F. and B.* Note how the reward is far more than the seed sown, how large-hearted God is in his giving, repaying in character and usefulness, and heavenly blessedness, all the care and toil given to the good seed, a harvest immeasurably larger than the seed sown. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, chap. 13, p. 418. Thomson's *Land and Book*, 1:115-117; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 361, 368, 454; Guthrie, Trench, Arnot, and Cummings on the *Parables*; *Sermons*, by F. W. Robertson, series 1; by Sumnerfield; by Davies, vol. 3, "The Guilt and Doom of Impenitent Hearers;" by H. W. Beecher, "The Deceitfulness of Riches." *Christ in Literature*, p. 137.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Among thorns. There are a great many more thorny plants in Palestine than in America, and these plants love the wheat-fields. The farmers have a habit of going out before these thorns go to seed, and gathering them with a sickle. But some farmers are too lazy, and others neglect a corner of their fields, and it will presently be overrun with coarse thorns. But the stalks rot away and disappear in the winter, and only their seeds remain concealed in the ground at the season of sowing. The earth looks like that of the rest of the field; and the farmer ploughs in his seed with a good heart, in hopes of an abundant return. But the thorns spring up with the wheat; and, being much stronger, their roots soon twine about those of the wheat, and absorb all the water from the ground, and their plants overshadow the green blades. And so the plants either make no seeds, or so few and poor ones that the farmer does not care to pick out the stalks from the thorns, and he either burns them altogether, or threshes out all as food for his donkey. — *Post*, in *Schaff's Bible Dictionary*.

II. Scripture examples. We have several Scripture examples of the four characters. Pharaoh and Festus may be named as "wayside" hearers. King Saul, Herod Antipas, the Galatians (Gal. 5:7), some of the disciples in Galilee (John 6:66), proved to be like the "stony ground;" Balaam, Judas, and Ananias, like the "thorny ground." The young ruler, Simon Magus, and Demas, combine some of the features of the two latter classes; Felix combines those of the first and second. Peter was in danger of being one of the second class; Lot and Martha, of belonging to the third. Of the good soil, Nathanael and Lydia are striking instances. — *Eugene Stock*.

III. The deceitfulness of riches. We have had in New York, an ice-storm where the gently descending rain froze as it fell, until it covered every tree and shrub with a raiment of brilliancy as if it had been plaited in diamond, and hung with the finest diamond drops — brilliant, superb to look upon, almost an apocalypse of natural beauty. Yet the very brilliant garniture overwhelmed and destroyed what was tender and vital in the shrub it adorned. So devotion to the accumulation of wealth, to pleasure, may destroy that which is finest and grandest in our spiritual nature. — *Report of Sermon by R. S. Storrs, D.D.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 2. Christ's method of teaching is an example for all teachers.
2. Vers. 3, 14. The soul is the natural soil for the Word of God: one is adapted to the other.
3. It is our duty to sow the good seed everywhere, even if some fails of a good result.
4. The seed the Christian should sow is not his own fancies, but the pure word of God.
5. Vers. 4, 15. It is not the fault of the truth, but of our hard hearts, if we do not bring forth fruit.
6. Vers. 5, 6, 16, 17. We are to be careful not to mistake excitement for new hearts.
7. The use of times of trial, temptation, coldness, is to test men, whether they are Christians or not.

8. Vers. 7, 18, 19. Riches, like the serpents of Laocoön, twine and twist themselves around every energy and susceptibility of their being. — *Morison*.

9. We may be ruined by the excess of things which are right in themselves. Trees will not flourish on the north side of the house, nor many flowers under the dense shade of trees; nor religion under the shade of excessive cares and labors to become rich.

10. Ver. 9. We all have whatever is necessary to salvation. It is our fault if we fail.

11. Vers. 11, 12. God deals with each person according to his nature.

12. One punishment of sin is a deadness to all the influences by which we could be saved from sin.

13. But even then whatever God does is to help and to save.

14. Vers. 8, 20. If we sow good seed, we are sure of a harvest.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

After an introduction on parables, and why Christ spoke in parables, we come to the subject of the lesson, GOD'S WORD AND MAN'S SOUL. (1) *The sower*, Christ; (2) *the seed*, God's word of truth; (3) *the soil*, man's soul, (4) *the harvest*: (a) the seed by the wayside, (b) the seed on stony ground, (c) the seed among thorns, (d) the seed in good ground.

LESSON IX. — FEBRUARY 26.

THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM. — MARK 4:21-34.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon.* — Ps. 72:16.

TIME. — Autumn, A.D. 28. The same day as the last lesson, being a part of the same discourse.

PLACE. — The shores of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum; Jesus sitting in a boat, and speaking to the multitudes on the shore.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, under Cæsar; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Vers. 21-25 are parallel with Luke 8:16-18. (These same thoughts were uttered by Christ on several other occasions, and with a different application. See Matt. 5:15; 10:26. Luke 12:2. Matt. 11:15; 7:2. Luke 6:38. Matt. 25:29. Luke 19:26.) The parable of the seed growing secretly, vers. 26-29, has no parallel, being given only by Mark. Vers. 30-32 are parallel with Matt. 13:31, 32; and vers. 33, 34, with Matt. 13:34-35.

INTRODUCTION.

This lesson is a part of the same discourse with our last lesson. Some of the thoughts were uttered on several occasions, and, as Morison says, were probably some of our Saviour's favorite seed-thoughts which he would often drop by the wayside. — *P.* All three parables (the sower, and the two in this lesson) present the one idea of the growth or development of the kingdom of God: the *first*, as respects the soil, or the difficulty of its beginnings; the *second*, illustrating the *relative independence* of this development; the last, its wonderful extension. — *Schaff*.

21. ¶ ¹ And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

And he said unto them, Is ^{not} the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the

¹ Matt. 5:15. Luke 8:16; 11:33.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Some Favorite Seed Thoughts of our Saviour.** — Vers. 21-25. These words were here spoken in reference to teaching by parables, that those who heard him might take care to gain from them all the instruction which they were capable of giving. — *Alford*.

21. **Unto them:** the multitudes together with his disciples. **Candle;** rather, lamp. In ancient times lamps were made of earthenware; and the wealthy had them of brass, silver,

22. ¹For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23. ²If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. ³With what measure ye mete, it shall be meas-

stand? For there is nothing ²²hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was *any thing* made secret, but that it should come to light. If any ²³man hath ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, ²⁴Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it

¹ Matt. 10: 26. Luke 12: 2. ² Ver. 9. Matt. 11: 15. ³ Matt. 7: 2. Luke 6: 38.

and gold. The poor alone still use lamps of earthenware. They are in the shape of a small plate or saucer, with the edge turned up at one side to hold the wick, and contain a spoonful of oil. Some are of tin, and have a cover. Olive-oil is used to burn in them. — *Van Lennep*. Under a bushel. The ordinary household measure, holding about a peck, commonly of wood. Under this the light could be hid. Or under a bed; rather, couch. Our Saviour must have had in view, not the native *mat*, *matting*, or *mattress*, which, when simply spread on the floor, served for bed or couch, but the Roman *triclinium*, or raised couch, that was used at formal meals, when the guests reclined at three sides of a central table. This raised couch, covered with some kind of matting, quilting, or carpeting, would be boarded down to the floor, so that a lamp put under it would have its light shut in from view. — *Morison*. To be set on a candlestick; or, lamp-stand. The modern Orientals use stands of brass or wood, on which to raise the lamps to a sufficient height above the floor on which they sit. Such stands are shaped not unlike a tall candlestick, spreading out at the top. Sometimes the lamps are placed on brackets against the wall, and often upon stools. — *Kitto*. The description applies to the common houses of the people. In each there was one principal room, in which they ate and slept: the lamp-stand, with its single light, the flour-bin, and the bed, with a few seats, were all its furniture. — *Cook*. Christ meant to teach his disciples by this illustration that their knowledge of the meaning of the parable was not given them for themselves alone, but was to shine forth to others. — *Ellicott*. It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts as fire is carried in the flint-stones; but we are outwardly, visibly, apparently, to serve and honor the living God. — *Richard Hooker*.



LAMP-STAND.

22. There is nothing hid . . . be manifested. The parable is not spoken but with the intention that its hidden meaning should be manifested to those who seek for light. — *Cook*. The mystery of grace hid from ages was intended to come abroad and to be published to the world (1 Cor. 4: 5). Therefore his *private* instructions to them were for most *public* use. — *Jacobus*. (See Col. 2: 3.) It is one of the longest plummets of thought that our Saviour ever let out in conversation. God hides some things. It is his glory to hide them (Prov. 25: 2). He hid several very important things under the shadows of the Jewish dispensation. He has hidden millions of other things, — in the crust of the earth, for instance, perhaps in its flora, perhaps in its fauna, perhaps in invisible telluric influences. He has hidden innumerable things in the sun and moon and stars. He hid in his own heart many other things which even his nearest disciples could not have stood (John 16: 12), or understood (John 13: 7). But this hiding, on the part of Christ and God, is, in every case, not final, but provisional. *The truth is hidden, that it may be found out and manifested*. Nothing is to be hidden forever. There is always a final end in hiding; and the end is *that it may be manifested*. Hence human progression in science and in all the applications of science. — *Morison*. Any thing kept secret [rather, made secret], but that it should come abroad, or, come to light. This is an emphatic repetition of the idea of the preceding clause.

23. If any man have ears. (See last lesson, under ver. 9.) Let him voluntarily listen till he understands. There are, comparatively speaking, but few patient and impartial hearers in the world. — *Morison*. We must hear with deep attention, and apply all our faculties to the message received. — *Jacobus*.

24. Take heed what ye hear. There is no scope for the exercise of will in reference to many of the things which we hear. But there are, on the other hand, many other things, which we may either hear or not, as we choose. We are responsible, therefore, for much that we hear, as well as for all that we speak. And if, for instance, we be eager to hear words of detraction, or censorious tittle-tattle, and scandal-talk, in reference to our neighbors, we must take the retributive consequences. Most likely they will be "counterpart"

ured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25. ¹ For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26. ¶ And he said,² So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

shall be measured unto you: and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him ²⁵ shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth:

¹ Matt. 13: 12; 25: 29. Luke 8: 18; 19: 26. ² Matt. 13: 24.

retribution. — *Morison*. And also *how* ye hear (Luke 8:18). Both are important, and parts of the same idea. You are not to hear every thing from every quarter, running after novelties and smooth things like the Athenians (Acts 17: 21). But see that *what* you hear is divine truth, and that you *so* hear as to believe and profit by it (John 7: 17; 8: 31, 32). — *Binney*. Satan enters in at *Ear-Gate*. — *Bunyan*. Observe the practical teaching of this verse: the way out of scepticism is a ready and unprejudicial hearing of such truth as is made plain; all is not disclosed at once. — *Abbott*. With what measure ye mete [literally *in* what measure] . . . measured to you. If they measure it correctly and distribute it freely, they will receive a corresponding reward; nay, far more shall be given. — *Cook*. The proverb furnishes a good illustration of our Lord's method of presenting the same truth under different aspects. In the Sermon on the Mount it appears as the law of retribution, which brings pardon to those who pardon, judgment without mercy to those who show no mercy. Here the law works in another region. With the measure with which we mete our knowledge, God will, in his bounty, bestow more knowledge upon us. — *Ellicott*. Unto you that hear. The words "that hear" are omitted in the best manuscripts. The reward will be, not for those who hear, but for those who use what they receive for the benefit of others. — *Cook*. Or those who hear in the sense of *obey*.

25. He that hath, to him shall be given. A proverbial expression, applicable alike in temporal and spiritual things, teaching that the true way of securing and increasing what we have is by improving it, and that failing to do this is equivalent to losing it. — *Binney*. This is explained by the parable of the pounds (Luke 19: 12-26). God gives us many things, but we *have* only so much of them as we use. If we use well our opportunities for learning, for doing good, for worship and love, we gain larger capacities for receiving and using. He who uses his Bible gets many times more from it than he who neglects it. It becomes a new book to him. The same is true of our love to God, our usefulness. There is only one way to have more, and that is to use well what we have. — *P*. He that hath not . . . even that which he hath. He shall lose even his desire and susceptibility, his power of receiving the truth, and be dead to all influences which might make him better. — *P*. The gift, whether of knowledge, money, or grace, which a man does not *use*, he does not really *have*. Unused possession is only a seeming possession. In Matt. 25: 30, the unprofitable servant is cast out into outer darkness: here, in being deprived of all that he hath, which includes the light of divine grace, the same sentence is really implied. — *Abbott*.

II. The Parable of the Seed growing secretly. — Vers. 26-29. This parable is peculiar to Mark; but its general lesson is enforced by parallel passages, e.g., Isa. 55: 10, 11. Jas. 5: 7, 8. 1 Pet. 1: 23-35. In the kingdom of grace as in nature, we are laborers together with God: the results of our work depend on him, and for the perfection of these results he takes his own time (1 Cor. 3: 6-9). Hence, (1) it is ours to sow the seed (the truth), his to give it growth; (2) having sown, we are to wait for time and God to perfect it; (3) this he does according to a definite order of development, — first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; (4) not until there has been time for the development, are we to expect to reap. The lesson is one of trust and hope; first, for ourselves in our own personal experience; second, for all ministers, sabbath-school teachers, and parents, in working for others. Gal. 5: 22, 23, describes the fruits of the Spirit which grow thus secretly, and require time for development and perfection. Eph. 4: 15, and Col. 2: 6, 7, show the source whence this growth is derived; namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 2: 12, and 2 Pet. 1: 5, show that though the growth is the work of God, still diligence is required of the spiritual as of the natural husbandman. — *Abbott*. It finds an interpretation in the growth of the kingdom, (1) in the world at large, (2) in the heart of each individual. — *Ellicott*.

26. So is the kingdom of God. Christ's kingdom on earth, — his reign in the hearts of men. It signifies God's visible Church with its spiritual methods under the Christian dispensation. We may consider this Church as established at the day of Pentecost after our Lord's ascension (Acts 2). — *Crosby*. As if a man; i.e., any one. It is not necessary

27. And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

And should sleep and rise 27
night and day, and the seed
should spring up and grow,
he knoweth not how. The 28
earth beareth fruit of herself;
first the blade, then the ear,
then the full corn in the ear.

to interpret this; the main point is the *seed*, the agent being in the background throughout. Human agency in general may be referred to. — *Schaff*. Should cast seed; i.e., the word of God, the truth, either by preaching, teaching, example, or in whatever way. Into the ground. The hearts of those that hear.

27. And should sleep and rise night and day. Attend to his ordinary course of sleep at night, rising to labor by day, leaving the development of the seed to the laws of Nature and Providence. Heb. 6:7. Jas. 5:7. — *Binney*. He does not think it necessary to keep a continual watch, having once intrusted the seed to the ground. When the word of God, the seed, has found place in a heart, the sowers are not to be tormented with anxieties concerning the final issue, as though they were to keep it alive, and that it could only live through them. — *Trench*. The sower is thus represented as leaving the cornfield, not without *careful tending*, but without further sowing. — *Cook*. The seed should spring (i.e., germinate) and grow up, literally lengthen, i.e., develop from the germ into the plant. As the seed grows by gradual processes, so we may expect ordinarily, and as the law of God's gracious kingdom, that good planting will be followed by corresponding fruit, and that without any life-giving power in the man who sows. — *Jacobus*. So the principles of the Messiah's religion were communicated to men, God will make them efficacious, and secure the spread of them; blessed results will infallibly grow from these principles, in the spiritual welfare and salvation of men. The history of the Christian religion affords the appropriate illustration of this parable. — *Ripley*. Often the truth, dropped in the heart by a word in public teaching or private conversation, seems to be lost, but getting lodgement, germinates in after months or years, seeming to lie meanwhile dead, yet never having lost its power. Often by our impatience to force an immediate growth, or to examine for it, we frustrate our own work. — *Abbott*. He knoweth not how. Not only does the man not touch the seed, or seek by his own skill and energy to operate in it: he does not even know its inner essence, or the nature of its inner energy. — *Morison*. After all the researches of philosophers, not one has been able to tell the way in which grain grows. As God unseen, yet by the use of proper means, makes grass to flourish, so God unseen, but by proper means, nourishes the soul, and the plants of piety spring up, and bloom, and bear fruit. See John 3:8. The mystery of the life of God, in any and in every heart, is unfathomable: any attempt to determine that its course shall be this way, or shall be that way, is only mischievous. — *Trench*.

28. The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; as if from a self-acting power. The growth in nature is according to certain laws which act independently of man's agency; though the agency of God, who established these laws and acts through them, is not denied. The same is true in the kingdom of grace. The growth of the kingdom of God, in general and in individuals, is according to a development which is natural, i.e., in accordance with certain laws in the realm of grace, which are analogous to what are called natural laws, and like them acting with a certain spontaneousness, though God's constant energy is present in both. The mistakes opposed by this truth are, (1) *expecting growth without any seed*; (2) *taking up the seed to see how it grows*, i.e., perpetually exacting a certain kind of *experience*, and testing discipleship by unwise and premature measures; (3) trying to make the growth according to one's notions, thinking our care and anxiety can accomplish this. — *Schaff*. When it is said, "*the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*," this does not exclude the rain, and sun, and all other favorable influences; so neither, when we say that the seed of God implanted in any heart has life of its own, is it hereby implied that it will not require the nourishment suitable for it, — nay, rather it is affirmed that it will require it. — *Trench*. The farmer cannot make the seed grow, but he can help it by his care. He can keep up the fences, that the field be not trampled by stray cattle; he can gather out the stones, and pull up the weeds. So may ministers, and teachers of the word, remove obstructions which will prevent its growth. — *Arnot*. First the blade. There is a law of orderly development in natural growth, so also is it in reference to spiritual growth; comp. 1 John 2:12-14. — *Maclear*. Some growths are quicker than others, but in all there is growth. And we have no right to look for the end at the beginning, the ripened Christian experience in the young convert, the full corn in the first appearance of the blade. Observe, too, that we can know that *there is a growth* by its results, though we know not the *how*, and that each stage

29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he¹ putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30. ¶ And he said, ²Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31. *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:*

32. But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great

But when the fruit is ripe, ²⁹straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.

And he said, How shall we ³⁰liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth? It is like a grain ³¹of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, yet when it is sown, groweth ³²up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out

¹ Rev. 4: 15. ² Matt. 13: 31. Luke 13: 18. Acts 2: 41: 4: 4; 5: 14; 19: 20.

of the growth is more apparent than the preceding stage. The germ is unseen; the blade of corn is not easily distinguished from that of an unfruitful grass; the ear is more apparent; there is no mistaking the full corn in the ear. — *Abbott*.

29. When the fruit is brought forth; or, when the fruit admits or offers itself; i.e., when being ripe it is fit for the reaper, and allows his work. — *Cook*. Immediately. We are not to wait for a definite time, as in nature, before we gather in; but "when the fruit presents itself, *immediately*" we are to put in the sickle. Comp. John 4: 35, 36. Matt. 9: 37, 38. — *Abbott*. He (the sower) putteth in the sickle, *to reap*; or, impersonally, the harvesting is done. What and when the reaping is, depends on what is the fruit that is ripened. If the fruit sought is conversion, then the harvesting is success in winning souls from sin, and gathering them into the church, the granary. If it be the fruits of the Spirit, then the ingathering is the use made of them in the Master's service. If we consider the Christian himself as the fruit, it is his ingathering into his home in heaven. If the kingdom of God in the world is the fruit, the harvest is the millennium, the complete reign of Christ, and the final ingathering into the New Jerusalem at the Lord's second coming. — *P*.

III. The Parable of the Mustard Seed. — Vers. 30-34. This parable, setting forth the wonderful extension of the kingdom of God, is an appropriate close to the selections made by our Evangelist. After the difficulties in the beginning (the sower), and the slow growth independently of human agency, have been emphasized, the successful result is foretold. The lesson of *patience* is again enforced, but *hope* directly encouraged. — *Schaff*.

30. Whereunto shall we liken, etc. The rabbins commenced a discourse by questioning, as here and in Luke 13: 18. — *Jacobus*. With what comparison shall we compare it? Literally, in what parable should we place it? i.e., under what figure should we represent it? The word "we" implies deliberation, as though our Lord would invite his disciples to consider with him under what form the Church can be most completely represented. — *Cook*.

31. Like a grain of mustard seed. The mustard-plant (*sinapis orientalis*, or *nigra*) was a shrub, bearing pods; but in Eastern countries and in the South of Europe it is cultivated for its seed. The Jews grew mustard in their gardens. Its round seed-corns (4-6 in a pod) were proverbially characterized by them as the smallest thing, which indeed holds true so far as the various kinds of seed-corn used in Jewish husbandry are concerned, though scientific botany knows still smaller seeds. — *Lange*. It would be difficult to find an emblem which more faithfully represents the history of the visible Church of Christ than this grain of mustard-seed. — *Kyle*. When it is sown . . . less than all the seeds. Less in proportion to the size which it obtains at its maturity. — *P*. The mustard-seed is not the least of all seeds in the world, but of all which the husbandman was accustomed to sow; and the "tree," when full grown, was larger than the other herbs in his garden. — *Maclear*.

32. It groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs (i.e., garden-plants). Not absolutely, but in relation to the small size of the seed. The herb of our English garden is but a pygmy in comparison with the giant growth of a richer soil and a warmer climate. Dr. Hooker measured a mustard-plant in the Jordan Valley ten feet high. — *Biblical Things not Generally Known*. It grew into an herbaceous plant, as tall as a horse and his rider. — *Thomson: Land and Book*. The growth of a mighty kingdom is not here for the first time likened to that of a tree. Many of our Lord's hearers must have been familiar with such a comparison from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. — *Trench*. Daniel uses the growth of the tree to typify that of an earthly kingdom (Dan 4: 10-12), Ezekiel to symbolize that of the kingdom of God (Ezek. 17: 22-24; comp. Ps. 80: 8-11). This is the point to which the Lord calls especial attention, not to the greatness of the mustard-tree in itself,

branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33. ¹And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

34. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.

¹ Matt. 13:34. John 16:12.

but its greatness as compared with the seed from whence it springs; for what he would teach his disciples was not (merely) that his kingdom should be glorious, but that it should be glorious despite its weak and slight and despised beginnings. — *Trench*. In the world Christ's religion becomes greater than all other religions, and his kingdom than all other kingdoms, and shall yet fill all the earth. In the soul religion grows to be greater than all other thoughts, feelings, hopes, or interests. — *P*. Shooteth out great branches. Literally, *maketh great branches*, — great, relatively to the branches of other garden-herbs. — *Morison*. Referring to the various divisions and portions of his kingdom in different countries and in different methods of work, all filled with his one life; and in the soul to the various faculties it controls, the various directions of religious development, in thought, feeling, work. **The fowls of the air may lodge**. Literally, camp, or pitch tent, tabernacle; then, more generally, find shelter, and, still more so, dwell or sojourn. — *Alexander*. Birds are exceedingly fond of its seed, and, when it is ripened, settle on its branches, which are strong enough to bear them, however numerous they may be. — *Maldonatus*. "The interpretation of the parable lies almost on the surface. Here, again, the sower is the Son of man; but the seed in this case is not so much the 'word' as the Christian society, the church, which forms, so to speak, the first-fruits of the word. As it then was, it was smaller than any sect or party in Palestine or Greece or Italy. It was sown in God's field of the world, but it was to grow till it became greater than any sect or school, a tree among the trees of the forest, a kingdom among other kingdoms, — a great organized society; and the birds of the air, i.e., the systems of thought, institutions, and the like, of other races, were to find refuge under its protection." This parable, like most others respecting the kingdom of God, has a *double reference*, — *general* and *individual*. (1) In the general sense the insignificant beginnings of the kingdom are set forth; the little babe cast in the manger at Bethlehem; the man of sorrows, with no place to lay his head; the crucified One; or again the hundred and twenty names who were the seed of the church after the Lord had ascended; then we have the kingdom of God waxing onward and spreading its branches here and there, and different nations coming into it. (2) The *individual* application points to the small beginnings of divine grace; a word, a thought, a passing sentence, may prove to be the little seed which eventually fills and shadows the whole heart and being, and calls all thoughts, all passions, all delights, to come and shelter under it. — *Alford*. It gives hope to every Christian worker who plants but small seeds, and must leave time to develop the tree; to every Christian soul, who must expect his religious life to be *in its beginning* an instantaneous planting of the seed of grace, but *in its development* a gradual growth. — *Abbott*.

33. **With many such parables**. The many such expressions in the Gospels should put an end to the foolish assumption that each Evangelist intended to tell all that he knew. — *Schaff*. **The word**. The doctrine of his church, or gospel kingdom. **Able to hear it**. It was put gradually that they could receive the truth which was so opposite to their prejudices. He bore with them, and led them along step by step, as they could go. So the great Teacher often leads weak disciples out of darkness into God's marvellous light. — *Jacobus*.

34. **Without a parable**. That is, he adopted this method of illustration on this great subject, and by various similitudes he showed them what the kingdom was like. **And when they were alone**. How beautifully we read here Christ's gentle, faithful teachings, following up illustration by explanation, and in most familiar, confidential ways, bringing the truth home to their retirement! — *Jacobus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trench, Arnot, Cummings, etc., on *The Parables*; Cummings's *Scripture Readings*. In a striking poem, found in the Appendix to Fell's *Cyprian*, the growth of the kingdom of God, under the figure of that of a tree, is beautifully set forth. The seed growing secretly is

illustrated by the description of the progress of Christianity in Uhlhorn's *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*; and the wonderful growth from small beginnings, in Christlieb's *Foreign Missions*; *Sermons* by R. S. Storrs, "The Law of Growth in the Kingdom of God," N. P. 32; by John Foster, on "The Mustard Seed;" N. P. 29, by W. Warren, on "Religious Progress;" any *history of the Reformation*, or of *Methodism*, or of *any foreign mission* as at the *Sandwich Islands*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Take heed what ye hear. Mr. Tyndall says in his book on Sound, that there are persons who never hear the peculiar music of insects, which is very clear and plain to others. One sits in the midst of an oratorio: his neighbor is in perfect silence. Mr. Edwin Cowles, of the *Cleveland Leader*, says that he is afflicted with a deafness somewhat of the nature of color-blindness. He has never heard the sound of a bird, or the upper notes of a piano or violin, while the lower notes he hears perfectly well. He always believed, till he became a man, that the music of a bird was a poetical fiction. So a portion of the consonants he never hears, especially the hissing sound of "s." And this defective hearing affects his speech. So there are many who make themselves deaf to much that God says to man. They scarcely ever hear certain truths, — God's love, the duty of giving, certain promises of God, the higher notes of the Christian life, they no more hear than Mr. Cowles did the song of the birds. And hence they are to them but a poetical fiction. And it affects their speech. — *P.*

II. First the blade. The Church is an assembly of imperfect Christians in the process of being made perfect. It is not an assembly of perfect scholars, but a school; not a gallery of completed statues, but the artist's studio where the statues are being made; not a showcase of finished goods, but a factory; not a completed building, but one in the process, with the scaffolding and the *débris* still about it. — *P.*

III. Growth. Spain once held both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar. So highly did she value her possessions, that she stamped on her coin the two "Pillars of Hercules," as the promontories of rock were called; and on a scroll thrown over these were the words, "*ne plus ultra*," — no more beyond. But one day a bold spirit sailed far beyond these pillars, and found a new world of beauty. Then Spain struck the word *ne* from her coin, and left "*plus ultra*," — more beyond. — *Christian Mirror.*

IV. The earth bringeth forth fruit of itself. When St. Theresa went to Paris many years ago, for the purpose of founding an orphanage, she counted her money, and found it only two sous, or about one cent. She said, "Theresa and two sous are nothing; but Theresa and two sous, *and God*, are every thing!" — *Dr. Vincent's Normal Class.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 21. Let your light shine: the brighter and the farther it shines on others, the brighter its rays on those close by.

2. Ver. 22. God wants us to understand all spiritual truths, as fast as we are willing and able to receive them.

3. Ver. 23. It is of the utmost importance *what* we hear, and *how* we hear.

4. Ver. 24. The way to learn is to teach: the way to know is to impart.

5. Ver. 25. Misers of the truth, like misers of riches, never enjoy their wealth.

6. Unused faculties, like the eyes of the fishes in Mammoth Cave, lose their power.

7. Vers. 26-28. If we do our part, God is sure to do his.

8. They that sow in tears are sure to reap in joy.

9. The kingdom of God is progressive, in the heart and in the world.

10. Ver. 29. We are to use the good fruit as soon as it is ready. Take care of the harvest.

11. Ver. 31. Never despise humble and feeble beginnings. A spark has burned up a city: snowflakes stopped every railroad train in a State.

12. Religion is the most important thing in the soul, and brings all faculties and powers under its influence.

13. The Christian religion is sure to triumph, and fill the whole world.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The topic of this lesson is suggested by the *title* itself. It is the GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BOTH IN THE SOUL AND IN THE WORLD. (1) There are first given some of the *laws of religious growth* (vers. 21-25), variously illustrated; growth by shining, by right hearing, by giving, by right using; with the loss from misuse. (2) *Secret progress* (vers.

26, 27), with the limits of human agency in the progress. (3) *Orderly development* (vers. 28, 29), and the harvest that follows. (4) *From small beginnings* (vers. 30, 31), both in the soul and in the world; but resulting (5) in *complete success* (vers. 32-34), filling and controlling the soul, completely triumphing in the world.

LESSON X. — MARCH 5.

CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST. — MARK 4: 35-41.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.*

— Ps. 107: 29.

TIME. — Autumn, A. D. 28. Evening and night of the same day as the last lesson. The chronology of this occurrence would be wholly uncertain but for the precision of Mark.

PLACE. — Sea of Galilee. Jesus passes over the lake from the vicinity of Capernaum to the south-eastern side, into the country of the Gadarenes, a short sail of six or eight miles.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 8: 23-27. Luke 8: 22-25.

INTRODUCTION.

It had been a *busy day*; our Lord had first healed a demoniac (Matt. 12: 22), then encountered the accusation of his family (Mark 3: 20, 21); afterwards the accusation of the Pharisees (Mark 3: 22-30; more fully in Matt. 12: 24-45), when his mother and brethren sought him (Mark 3: 31-35; Matt. 12: 46-50); then after some discourses narrated by Luke only (ch. 11: 37-12: 59), departing to the seaside, had given the long discourse, parts of which are recorded in Mark 4 and Matt. 13, then encountered half-hearted followers (Matt. 8: 19-22), and in the evening crossed the lake. After such exhausting labors it is not strange that he fell asleep, even amid the storm. — *Schaff*. The great day of teaching was followed by a night and day of miracles, each showing forth some special attribute of our Lord's personality. They differ partly in kind, partly in degree, from previous manifestations of power. The first reveals him as Lord of nature, the second as Lord of spirits, the third as Healer of deadly disease, the fourth as Lord and Restorer of life. — *Cook*. Few miracles recorded in the Gospel were so likely to strike the minds of the apostles as this. Four of them, at least, were fishermen. Peter, Andrew, James, and John had probably known the Sea of Galilee, and its storms, from their youth. Few events in our Lord's journeyings to and fro upon earth contain more rich instruction than the one related in this passage. — *Kyle*.

35. ¹ And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

And on that day, when even 35
was come, he saith unto them,
Let us go over unto the other
side. And leaving the multi- 36
tude, they take him with them,
even as he was, in the boat.
And other boats were with
him. And there ariseth a 37

¹ Matt. 8: 18, 23. Luke 8: 22.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Tempest. — Vers. 35-38. 35. Let us pass over unto the other side. To avoid the crowd, who may have been in an excited condition, and to find repose after a day of conflict and labor. — *Schaff*. There is no recess in the eastern hills; no towns along its banks corresponding to those in the plain of Gennesareth. Thus this wilder region became a natural refuge from the active life of the western shores. — *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*.

36. When they had sent away the multitude. No doubt by telling them firmly that the Master would give no more instructions on that occasion. Took him even as he was. Just as he was in that particular boat in which he had been sitting while addressing the people. Time was pressing; and there might have been only additional pressure from the lingering remnants of the crowd, if the boat had been brought to land. — *Morison*.

37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, inasmuch that the boat was now filling. And he himself was 38 in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

The ship; or boat. The one in which he had been sitting while he discoursed to the multitude. Possibly it belonged to Peter or to the sons of Zebedee, and was always ready at their master's service (Mark 3:9). — *Ellicott*. It was not a large vessel such as we call a ship, but a good-sized fishing-boat, without a full deck. It would seem from Matthew (8:19-22), that, just as the boat was putting off, three men much interested in the discourses of Jesus proposed to join his company of disciples, — a scribe, one who wanted first to do other duties, and a third who must run home first and bid his friends good-by. None of these appear to have really gone with him, but lost their enthusiasm as soon as they saw the stern realities of his service. Other little ships; or, simply, other ships or boats. The best authorities do not give the diminutive form, "little ships." These other boats were probably separated from them during the subsequent gale. — *Schaff*. Though the great mass of the people were dismissed, many followed him across the lake, either having their own boats at hand or hiring some for the occasion. This accords with other notices of followers not counted among the twelve. — *Cook*.

37. There arose a great storm. Matthew describes it as a "great tempest," or tornado; literally, a shaking or concussion. Luke says, "There came down a storm of wind," which exactly corresponds to the phenomena of these sudden storms as described by modern travellers. — *Abbott*. The Greek word denotes a sudden and violent gust of wind, such as frequently bursts on the lake, which is surrounded by mountains with deep ravines. — *Cook*. The Sea of Galilee lies 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The snowy peaks of Lebanon are directly to the north. The heated tropical air of the valley is a constant invitation to the cold and heavy winds from the north, which sweep down with great fury, and in sudden storms, through the ravines of the hills which converge to the head of the lake, and act like gigantic funnels. — *Abbott*. These winds are not only violent, but they come down suddenly, and often when the sky is perfectly clear. I once went in to swim near the hot-baths; and, before I was aware, a wind came rushing over the cliffs with such ferocity that it was with great difficulty I could regain the shore. At another time, when on the eastern side, the sun had scarcely set when the wind began to rush down toward the lake; and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence, so that when we reached the shore next morning the face of the lake was like a huge boiling caldron. We had to double-pin all the tent-ropes, and frequently were obliged to hang with our whole weight upon them to keep the quivering tabernacle from being carried off bodily into the air. — *W. M. Thomson*. The waves beat into the ship; i.e., beat over its sides. Was now full. Rather, was already filling, or beginning to fill. — *Abbott*. The ship in the midst of the sea is an emblem of the Church in the midst of the world. We ought to expect to meet with tempests in the Church, and to see it covered with waves. The waves of heresy toss it from without; but the corruption of manners within, like the water which beat into this ship, puts it in much greater danger of perishing. — *Quesnel*.

38. He was in the hinder part. He is emphatic. While all the rest were awake and filled with terror, *he himself* was in the stern, the back part of the vessel, sleeping. — *Clark*. The stern in ancient ships was much higher than the prow; and this form continued even to the last century in England, while it is still the fashion in Egypt. The high stern made a safe and sloping place, where our Saviour slept in the storm. — *John Macgregor*. Asleep: he needed sleep like other men. On a pillow. The cushion of the rowers' bench, intended for the sailors to sit or lie down upon. — *Meyer*. At the extreme end of the stern is often seen a small low bench upon which the steersman sometimes sits for a change. Here the captain often rests his head when, as is his custom, he sleeps on the quarter-deck. This little bench may generally be seen on the fishing-crafts, particularly those which ply on the Sea of Galilee (see Macgregor: "Rob Roy on the Jordan," p. 358). — *Van Lennep*. The one Mediator, in whom we are bid to trust, has been himself "partaker of flesh and blood." The mighty High Priest, who is living for us at God's right hand, has had personal experience of all the sinless infirmities of the body. He has himself hungered, and thirsted, and suffered pain. He has himself endured weariness, and sought rest in sleep. Let us pour out our hearts before him with freedom, and tell him our least troubles without reserve. He who made atonement for us on the cross is one who "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15). — *Ryle*. This shows Christ's human nature, as his power over the sea did his divine nature. — *P*. When he comes down as the Incarnate

39. And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

And he awoke, and rebuked 39 the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a

One, to be man with us, tired and spent as we by life's toils, when he lies so humbly down that the waters of a lake dash over him, and there sleeps, our feeling is in a strange maze of tenderness. Our God is so nigh, our glorious tent-mate in a guise so gentle, that we come to look upon him in his divine sleep more tenderly than we could even in the waking mercies and charities of his life. — *Bushnell*. **Master, Teacher.** The confusion in which they were appears to be strikingly expressed by their variety of manner in calling upon the Lord, which may be observed by a comparison of the three Evangelists here. Matthew says, Lord; Mark says, Master; and Luke, Governor, Master, or Preceptor. Different disciples may have used different titles, as would be natural in such a case. It is, however, to be noticed that the language in which the disciples spoke was not the Greek, and that the same Syriac word may be translated by different Greek words. — *Mimpriss*. The various accounts indicate a variety of expressions, all of fear, though this includes a complaint. The same want of faith is still manifest in Christians in times of trial, even though not thus expressed. — *Schaff*. **Carest thou not that we perish?** A mingled prayer and complaint, with mingled fear and faith. The cries of intense anxiety, the exclamations of terror. "Teacher, we are lost! hast thou no concern for us? Canst thou lie sleeping here while we are perishing? Save us from impending ruin!" (Matt. 8:25.) How great the tempest thus to terrify the disciples, who were accustomed to sailing and fishing on the lake! — *Clark*.

II. **The Tempest stilled.**—Vers. 39-41. 39. **He arose and rebuked.** *Rebuked*, in words, as if it were a rational agent; which some consider as implying that the storm was raised by Satan or his demons, who were then the real objects of the following reproof and order. — *Alexander*. This seems to have been almost, so to say, our Lord's formula in working miracles. The fever (Luke 4:39), the frenzy of the demoniac (Mark 9:25), the tempest, are all treated as if they were hostile and rebel forces that needed to be restrained. — *Ellicott*. Mark gives the very words of the rebuke: "Peace, be still." **Peace, be still.** Literally, *be dumb, be muzzled*, as though the howling wind was a maniac to be gagged and bound. — *Ellicott*. The quiet and simple recital of the Evangelists more effectually realizes this scene, and "dilates the strong conception" of this sublime transaction, than any garniture of words in prose or verse could do. Nothing comes near it but that one other instance which the commencement of the sacred volume supplies: "And he said, Light be: and light was." And the analogy of the two examples is nearer than might at first appear, for he who now rebukes the wind is he "by whom also God made the worlds;" he, "without whom was nothing made that was made." — *Kittó*. It is a solemn, a wonderful moment in the gospel history. We have read this story so often, and read it so carelessly, that this moment in the life of Christ fails to make its due impression. The Lord rises, confronting the storm, speaks as the Master of the elements that are raging about him, — and the result is immediate. — *Dean Howson*. The miracles of Jesus, as attestations that the elements of nature were plastic in his hands, are really a new key to the grandest scientific principle in the universe, — which is, that God lives and moves and acts in all of nature every instant; and that the whole creation is formed and guided in the interest of the spiritual man, i.e., of the kingdom of heaven on the earth. This world is a place for the training of souls in a Christian immortality. All its laws are yet to serve that end. Its evils, sufferings, disorders, its blights and tempests and agonies, are somehow in it. Every thing material, visible, and tangible, answers to something, expresses something, symbolizes something, in the soul and its spiritual life, as it is hereafter to be developed. Hence Christ must be Lord of life and death, of seas and storms, of diseases and demons, of every mystery and might and secret of created things. "The winds and the sea obey him." The whole creation, now groaning and travelling in pain together, waits for the redemption, the manifestation of the sons of God. — *F. D. Huntington, D.D.* **There was a great calm.** The stopping of the wind might have been thought an accidental coincidence, for these sudden storms cease as suddenly as they arise. But it always requires time for the sea to subside: here the calm was instant. — *Abbott*. **Why are ye so fearful?** So *fearful* may either mean, afraid in so unreasonable a degree? or, with a kind of fear so inconsistent with your faith in me? In either case the question implies censure and disapprobation; not because there was no danger, or because they had no right to be alarmed, but because their danger although real, and alarm though natural, ought to have been neutralized and nullified by his presence, and by unshaken confidence in his ability and willingness to save them. — *Alexander*. When faith possesses the heart, its prayer may be passionate and urgent, but it will not be full of trouble. — *Godet*. **That ye have no faith.** Next to none, or none in present exercise.

40. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

great calm. And he said unto 40 them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith? And 41 they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

In Luke it is, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" *Faith* they had, for they applied to Christ for relief; but *little*, for they were afraid, though Christ was in the ship. Faith dispels fear, but only in proportion to its strength. — *J. F. and B.* He acknowledges the faith which they had; answers the prayer of faith, by working a perfect calm; but rebukes them for not having the stronger, firmer faith, to trust him even when he seemed insensible to their danger. — *Alford.*

41. They feared exceedingly. Meaning the disciples, and other sailors if any were in the boat. What manner of man? An expression, not of ignorance or doubt, but of wonder and awe. Surely this is the Son of God. — *P.* They felt that they were in the presence of a far greater Power than what had pressed upon their senses in the storm. There were heights and depths in the Saviour which they had not hitherto realized. — *Morison.* Even the wind and the sea obey him. To us, perhaps, the wonder of this miracle is not so great as in the case of some of the rest; but to *them* it was greater than in any other instance. They had become accustomed to other miracles, but this was a wonder of a totally different kind. No one knows better than the boatman and the fisherman, that he must take the weather as he finds it; that, do what he will, the winds and the waves will refuse his control. The sudden arresting of a tempest was to them an inconceivable wonder. — *Houson.*

III. The Application. Such a miracle, wrought before those to whom the terrors of the lake were the highest natural danger, was best adapted to convince them of his *power to save the soul*. By it he also taught a *lesson of faith*, and warned against unbelief, as well as attested to the mere lookers-on his divine power. All his miracles are *displays, not only of power, but of love* to lost men. — *Schaff.* The personal application is one of comfort and strengthening of faith in danger and doubt. — *Alford.* (I.) *That ship on the Sea of Galilee is the type of the Church of Christ.* We shall do no wrong to the literal truth of this and other of Christ's miracles by recognizing the character, at once symbolic and prophetic, which many of them also bear, and this among the number. It need hardly be observed that the sea is evermore in Scripture the symbol of the restless and sinful world (Dan. 7:2, 3. Rev. 13:1. Isa. 57:20). As the kernel of the old humanity, Noah and his family, was once contained in the ark, which was tossed upon the waves of the deluge, so the kernel of the new humanity, of the new creation, Christ and his apostles, in this little ship. And the Church of Christ has evermore resembled this tempestured bark, in that the waves of the world rage horribly around it, in that it has evermore been delivered out of the perils which seemed ready to overwhelm it, — and this because Christ is in it (Ps. 46:1-3; 93:3, 4); who, being roused by the cry of his servants, rebukes these winds and these waters before they utterly overwhelmed the ship. — *Trench.* Ours is a ship on a voyage, not a ship in a harbor, so that the storms blow over us; but it is a ship in progress, battling with the winds and the waves. It is not the absence of danger, but the presence of Christ, which re-assures us. Our confidence is simply this: that Christ is in the ship, and that, when he is pleased to rebuke the tempest, the wind and the sea will obey him. — *MacDonald.* So often has Christ preserved his Church in danger, from the storms of persecution and worldliness and false doctrine, and so often has she ridden triumphant over her enemies, that in every danger and trial that comes we feel assured that Christ will in due time again utter his "Peace, be still." But it is only the *Church with Christ in it*, the divine Saviour, that is safe. (II.) *It is the type of the soul in the storm of life.* We are sailing in this life as through a sea; and the wind rises, and storms of temptation are not wanting. What shalt thou do to be delivered? Arouse him, and say, Master, we perish. He will awaken; that is, thy faith will return to thee, and abide with thee always. When Christ is awakened, though the tempest beat into, yet it will not fill, thy ship: thy faith will now command the winds and the waves, and the danger will be over. — *Augustine.* Carrying out this allegory, we may observe: (1) Christ's presence does not prevent our ship of life from being endangered; but, if he is with us, it cannot be wrecked. (2) Our unuttered but often heart-felt reproaches of a seemingly indifferent Christ, "Carest thou not that we perish?" are always unjust. (3) To timid disciples, who imagine, because of sudden and serious storms, that all is lost, for themselves, their children, the nation, or the Church, Christ still says, "Why are ye fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" (4) He does not always bring the help he might, nor as soon as he might (comp. Mark 6:48. John 11:6.) But he asks us

to trust him alike when he comes and when he tarries, when he seems to be watching and when he seems to be sleeping. — *Abbott*. Our disasters and happy fortunes, our tempests and our calms, our perils and deliverances, come to set us thinking of him whom, in the quiet every-day course of our life, we are too apt to forget. They come to teach us that he is always with us, ordering all things according to the good pleasure of his will, and to constrain us to trust in him instead of in ourselves, by making us feel how utterly we are in his hands. — *S. Cox*. (III.) *A type of the tempest of sin*. Sin always raises a storm, as it did in Jonah's case. All the diseases, oppressions, cruelties, gnawings of conscience, lives without hope, and hearts without rest, are a part of the tempest raised by sin. But the greatest fury of the storm is in the future. In this world we see but the little cloud, compared with the tornado and hurricane yet to come. There is no human escape from this storm. No earthly voice can bid the winds and waves to cease. But Christ, by his forgiving love, says, "Peace, be still," for all that call on him, and arches over all the bow of peace. — *P*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trench and MacDonald, on the *Miracles*. Howson's *Meditations on the Miracles*, p. 45. *Sermons*, by H. W. Beecher, series 2, "The Authority of Right over Wrong," and a *Nat. Fast-day Sermon*, "Peace, be still." *Sermons* by F. W. Maurice, "Lord of the Winds and Seas." Chrysostom on *Matt.*, *Hom.* 28. On the form of Oriental ships, see Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, pp. 59-65. *Poem*, by Mrs. E. Barrett Browning, "He giveth his beloved sleep."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Jonah and his story are an excellent illustration of the storm which sin brings into the soul and into the world.

II. When Cesar was crossing a rough stream, and the rowers were becoming frightened, he encouraged them by saying, "You are carrying Cesar: you need fear nothing." So whatever soul carries Christ need not fear the worst storm of trouble or temptation which ever assailed man. — *P*.

III. In *Chambers's Journal* a Shetlander writes of the great and sudden tempests which assail the fishermen's vessels, and the method they sometimes use of *oiling the sea* for safety. "They crush in their hands the livers of any ling or cod they may have caught, and keep throwing them astern and around them. The effect is magical. The waves are not lessened in size, but they no longer *break*; and it is only from their breaking close to the boat, and so being dashed in upon her, and filling her, that there is danger. The rapidity with which the oil spreads over a considerable space of the sea around is marvellous, and scarcely to be credited except by one who has witnessed the phenomenon." He describes the saving of a Shetland vessel by this means some years ago. Such is Christ's "Peace, be still," to the stormy waters of temptation and sorrow. — *P*.

IV. *Peace in the storm*. Some years ago, an officer in the army, who was a pious man, embarked, with his wife and children. They had not been many days at sea, when a violent storm arose, which threatened the destruction of the ship, and the loss of all their lives. Consternation and terror prevailed among the crew and passengers: his wife also was greatly alarmed. In the midst of all, he was perfectly calm and composed: his wife, observing this, began to upbraid him with want of affection to her and her children, urging, that, if he was not concerned for his own safety, he ought to be for theirs. He made no reply, but immediately left the cabin, to which he returned in a short time with his sword drawn in his hand, and with a stern countenance pointed it to her breast; but she, smiling, did not appear at all disconcerted or afraid. "What!" said he, "are you not afraid when a drawn sword is at your breast?" — "No," answered she, "not when I know that it is in the hand of one who loves me." — "And would you have me," replied he, "to be afraid of this storm and tempest, when I know it to be in the hand of my heavenly Father, who loves me?" — *Anon.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 37. The way of the highest and best is sometimes in darkness and storm. — *Godwin*.

2. "Our destinies are ever in the hands of others." We cannot decide what shall come to us, but only what we will do with it when it comes.

3. We must not suppose, that, because difficulties and troubles arise, that therefore we are doing wrong. — *Ryle*.

4. Ver. 38. Christ's sleeping from weariness shows his human nature, — that he was tempted in all points like as we are.

5. To be weary of working for God, is sinful; but to be wearied and worn in doing God's work, is no sin at all. Jesus himself was weary, and Jesus slept. — *Ryle*.
6. Christ often appears sleeping, and unconscious of our trouble, in the Church, in reforms, in our anxiety for others, in our seeking salvation.
7. The true way in trouble is always to go straight to Christ.
8. Ver. 39. Christ is Lord of nature as well as of spirit, and hence can make all things work together for our good.
9. Troubles are like a bell which calls attention to the salvation God brings his people.
10. Even in war, moral power is to physical as three parts out of four. — *Napoleon I*.
11. Christ brings peace to every troubled soul that goes to him for help.
12. We should have faith even in the unseen Christ.
13. Never be discouraged as to any cause, so long as Christ is in it.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The lesson to-day is a parable in action. It teaches us as did the scenes in the house of the Interpreter, in "Pilgrim's Progress." It was a symbol of THE TEMPEST OF SORROW, OF SIN, OF OUTWARD DIFFICULTIES, AND THE WAY TO FIND PEACE. (1) Note first *the storm* (vers. 35-37), and how sin brings a storm; how the opposition to every good cause, to the Church, is like a storm; how trouble is often like a storm, while life is like a sea. (2) *Christ is asleep in the storm* (ver. 38). As he often seems hidden in hours of danger. But every soul or cause is safe if Christ is really in it. Mark how this teaches *Christ's human nature*, as his "Peace, be still," does his *divine nature*, and draw out the lessons of comfort and trust which each fact brings. (3) *Going to Christ in trouble* (vers. 38, 40). They were afraid because they had so little faith: they went to Christ because they had some faith. Christ the only one to go to. (4) *Peace* (vers. 39-41). Christ's power over nature, because he was the creator of nature (John 1:3). Therefore he can make all things work together for our good (Rom. 8:28). Jesus will bring every soul that trusts in him, and every cause in which he is, safely out of every tempest. Bring together the promises to this effect.

LESSON XI. — MARCH 12.

POWER OVER EVIL SPIRITS. — MARK 5: 1-20.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* — 1 JOHN 3:8.

TIME. — Autumn, A. D. 28. The morning after the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee (our last lesson).

PLACE. — The country of the Gadarenes, on the south-eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was in the country of the Gergesenes (so named from their capital, Gergesa, the modern Kersa, directly across the lake from Tiberias), which was a portion of the larger region of the Gadarenes (so named from their capital, Gadara, a large city seven or eight miles south-east of the southern point of the lake). The demoniac may have belonged to Gadara, but have met Jesus in the vicinity of Gergesa.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 8: 28-33. Luke 8: 26-39.

INTRODUCTION.

After the tempest was stilled, Jesus and his disciples proceeded on their voyage, and arrived in the country of the Gadarenes early the next morning. Here Jesus wrought a still greater miracle than that on the sea. — *P*. There is something very striking in the connection in which this miracle stands with that other which went immediately before. Our Lord has just shown himself as the pacifier of the tumults and the discords in the outward world. But there is something wilder and more fearful than the winds and the waves in their fiercest moods — even the spirit of man, when it has broken loose from all restraints, and yielded itself to be the organ, not of God, but of him who brings uttermost confusion wheresoever his dominion reaches. And Christ will do here a yet mightier work

1. And ¹they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes. And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who

¹ Matt. 8: 28. Luke 8: 26.

than that which he accomplished there: he will speak, and at his potent word this madder strife, this blinder rage, which is in the heart of man, will allay itself; and here also there shall be a great calm. — *Trench.*

EXPLANATORY.

1. In the country of the Gadarenes; or, *Gerasenes*, as in the *Revised*. So Luke. But Matthew calls it the country of the *Gergesenes*, changed in the *Revised* to *Gadarenes*. The simple explanation of this difference is, that Gadarenes and Gerasenes are different names for the inhabitants of the same large district, so called from Gadara and Gerasa, two large cities of that region; while Gergesenes is the name of the people of a smaller district within the other, and named from the city of Gergesa. — *P.* Gergesa is to be sought at Kersa, the ruin of a walled city on the lake, nearly opposite Tiberias, but a little farther north. Near Gergesa is a steep cliff, about a quarter of an hour distant from the water, across the level ribbon of land on the shore. Gadara, on the other hand, was a city of great extent, "the capital of Perea," about three miles south of the Hieromax River, and seven or eight from the south end of the Lake of Galilee. Its ruins, now called *Um-Keis*, spread for about two miles; and around it are rocky cliffs, dotted here and there with ancient tombs, in many of which a lunatic or a hermit would be glad to live. — *Kendrick*. Gerasa is some distance south-east of Gadara.

2. There met him. This man with his companion, starting from the tombs, which were their ordinary dwelling-place, rushed down to encounter the intruders that had dared to set foot on their domain. Or it may have been that they were at once drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that he was their helper, and driven from him by the sense of the awful gulf that divided them from him, the Holy One of God. — *Trench.* Out of the tombs. These were caves formed by nature or cut in the rocks, with cells at the sides for the reception of the dead. They were ceremonially unclean (Num. 19: 11, 16. Matt. 23: 27. Luke 11: 44), and dwelling in them was of itself a sign of degradation. — *Abbott*. The most interesting remains at Gadara are its tombs, which dot the cliffs for a considerable distance round the city, chiefly on the north-east declivity. — *McClintock and Strong's Cyc.* While the tombs at Gadara are remarkable, yet the whole region is so perforated everywhere by these rock-chambers of the dead, that we may be quite certain that a home for the demoniac will not be wanting, whatever locality be assigned for the events recorded by the Evangelist. — *Tristram's Land of Israel*. "I found myself in a cemetery, whose sculptured turbans showed me that the neighboring village was Moslem. The silence of the night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which I discovered proceeded from a naked maniac, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me, he left his canine comrades, and, bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff by the grip he held of the powerful Mameluke bit." — *Warburton's Crescent and the Cross*. A man. Matthew says two. Of the current explanations of the seeming difficulty that Matthew names two, and the other Evangelists one demoniac, that of Chrysostom and Augustine seems most satisfactory, — that one of the demoniacs took so entirely the prominent part as to cause two of the narrators to omit all mention of his companion. — *Ellicott*. With an unclean spirit. A devil; called unclean because it produced uncleanness of body and of soul: the exact opposite of pure. — *P.* It is not easy to answer the question, What was this demoniacal possession? But we may gather from the Gospel narrative some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the Devil, or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the Devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness, — sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Saviour of men for mercy; a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the

3. Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him. And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with

fierce struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. It has been not improbably supposed that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. Lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness. — *Alford*. To the frequent inquiry, How comes it that similar possessions do not occur at the present day? it may be answered: (1) It cannot be proved that they do not sometimes occur even now. It cannot be said that in many cases of insanity, and in some cases of spiritualism, the malady may not be traced to the direct agency of demons. (2) But, admitting that such possessions are not common, yet there was a reason in our Saviour's day for the external manifestation of Satan's power. The crisis of the moral history of the world was at hand. The Devil was allowed to exercise unusual power in temptation on the souls and bodies of men, in order that Christ might meet him openly and manifest his power in his victory over him. When God was manifested in the flesh, then demons may have been permitted to manifest themselves specially among men. — *Clark*. It seems as if the forces that wrought to resist him had been held in reserve for that critical hour, to be then precipitated in fiercest assault of infernal phalanx on the field of his divine operations. The very sky of Palestine looks lurid, its sod seems teeming with malign shapes and glancing figures swift for evil, as we revert to the years when he walked there. — *R. S. Storrs*.

3. **Had his dwelling among the tombs.** This implies habitual residence, and long absence from the homes of the living. Evil or unclean spirits are generally represented as haunting waste desolate places and tombs. — *Cook*. The tombs are not infrequently used in Palestine by certain of the poorer classes as dwelling-places. Their character (caves cut in the rock) makes them a perfect shelter. — *Abbott*. **No man could bind him.** The better MSS. give, "no man could any longer bind him." The attempt had been so often made and baffled that it had been given up in despair. — *Ellicott*.

4. **Bound with fetters and chains.** The case was probably one of long standing, and repeated efforts had been made to confine him (Luke 8:29). Fetters were for the feet, chains for any other part of the body. — *Schaff*. The fetters might consist of cords; for the word translated *broken*, below, literally means *rubbed to pieces*. — *Meyer*. Luke says (8:29) that "oftentimes it (the unclean spirit) had caught him;" and after mentioning how they had vainly tried to bind him with chains and fetters, because "he brake the bands," he adds, "and was driven of the devil (or 'demon') into the wilderness." The dark tyrant-power by which he was held clothed him with superhuman strength, and made him scorn restraint. Matthew (8:28) says he was "exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way." He was the terror of the whole locality. — *J. F. and B.* **Chains had been plucked asunder.** This is nowise incredible; for there are still some forms of mania in which the sufferer, notwithstanding the constant exhaustion of mind and body, gains a daily increase of muscular strength, and is able to break the strongest bonds and even chains. — *Killo*. **Neither could any man tame him.** It is often the case that very violent maniacs are quite calm and submissive under the authoritative eye and bearing of instinctively commanding natures. But the Gerasene demoniac had not met any one who had power to soothe or to subdue him. — *Morison*.

5. **Night and day.** Deprived of sleep. Luke says also that he was naked. **In the mountains, . . . the tombs.** At one time he would be sitting moodily in an empty tomb; at another he would be roaming about excitedly over the mountains, "in" the gorges and wild nooks, and wherever any sequestered haunts could be reached in the thickets or by the most precipitous crags. — *Morison*. **Crying.** No doubt with unearthly yells. **Cutting himself with stones.** There is sometimes a strong propensity in maniacs to wound and even to maim themselves. V. Swieten says that he himself "saw a maniac who lacerated all the integuments of his body, and who, during the inclemency of a severe winter, lay naked on straw for weeks, in a place rough with stones." — *Morison*.

6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.)

9. And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

stones. And when he saw 6 Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying 7 out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not. For 8 he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man. And he asked him, 9 What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many.

6. When he saw Jesus afar off. As he met Jesus immediately on his landing from the ship (see ver. 2). This must refer to the more distant sight of him, as the ship was approaching the land. — *Owen*. Ran . . . worshipped . . . cried with a loud voice. He felt himself at once attracted and repelled by this man: this led to a violent crisis in him, which revealed itself first of all in a cry. Then, like some ferocious beast submitting to the power of his subduer, he runs and kneels, protesting all the time, in the name of the spirit of which he is still the organ, against the power which is exerted over him. — *Godet*. Olshausen refers the act of going to Jesus, and bowing down before him, to the man in contradistinction to the demon. The man wanted help, and sought it in Jesus; and the will of the demon trying to overpower him made the terrible paroxysms of conflict. — *P*. Worshipped him. The demons recognized Christ's divine nature, or at least felt his superhuman influence, and bowed down to him, *did him reverence*. — *Clark*.

7. What have I to do with thee? What have we in common? why interferest thou with us? why wilt thou not let us alone? — *Trench*. Son of the most high God. The spirits, who had possession of the poor man's body, wielded his organism of speech as if it were their own. It is a marvel; but nevertheless it is, at bottom, no greater a mystery than the wielding of the same organism by the human spirit itself. The demoniac spirits seem everywhere to have known the Saviour. — *Morison*. I adjure thee by God. To adjure is to entreat solemnly, as if under oath, or the penalty of a curse. — *Webster*. This is the language of the demon, not of the man; not a mere blasphemy, but a plausible argument. — *Schaff*. Nothing is more common than swearing by God, on the part of the ungodly, the infidel, and even the atheistic. — *Morison*. Torment me not. In Matthew, "Art thou come hither to torment us 'before the time'?" i. e., we implore thee to deal with us as God himself does; not to precipitate our final doom, but to prolong the respite we now enjoy. — *Alexander*.

8. Come out of the man. Leave him; no more control him. — *J. F. and B*.

9. And he asked. He delayed obeying, to argue the case. No doubt the Lord could have forced them to do so had he willed, but the man might have perished in the process. (Cf. Mark 9: 26.) Even that first bidding had brought on a terrible paroxysm. It was then of Christ's own will, of the Physician's, wise and tender as he was strong, to proceed step by step. — *Trench*. What is thy name? He asks the afflicted man his name. For what purpose? There is nothing so suitable as a calm and simple question to bring a madman to himself. There is no more natural way of awakening in a man who is beside himself the consciousness of his own personality, than to make him tell his own name. A man's name becomes the expression of his character, and a summary of the history of his life. The first condition of any cure of this afflicted man was a return to the distinct feeling of his own personality. — *Godet*. And he answered. The man was asked, but the demon answered, showing his entire mastery over him. — *Stock*. My name is Legion, the unclean spirit answers. The Roman legion consisted of about six thousand. The word had come to signify any large number, with the ideas of order and subordination. It is about equivalent to *host*, and explained by the unclean spirit himself: For we are many. One chief, superior one, with inferior ones under him. — *Clark*. The answer showed how complete was the duality of his consciousness. He could not distinguish between himself and the multitudes of demons by whom he believed himself to be possessed. — *Farrar*. He besought him, . . . send away . . . out of the country. This is probably explained by Luke's record (ch. 8: 31), that he would not command them to go out into "the deep," or the abyss, out of their permitted abode on earth. It is not to the lake or sea, but to their expected perdition, to which they begged not to be sent. — *Jacobus*. The petition of the devils may be regarded as equivalent to, "Send us anywhere, anywhere but to perdition; send us

10. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea.

And he besought him much 10 that he would not send them away out of the country. Now 11 there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought 12 him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And he gave them 13 leave. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, in number about two thousand: and they were choked 14 in the sea. And they that fed 14

to the most shattered man; send us to the lowest creature, into man or beast, bird or reptile, anywhere but into hell!" — *Parker*.

11. Now there was there. *Now or but*. The attention is suddenly turned, for the moment, in a new direction. Nigh unto the mountains. Or rather, *nigh to the mountain*. The meaning is, *at the base of the mountain*. At the place referred to, a little to the south of the Wady Semakh, there is a considerable uneven plateau of fine fertile soil, stretching westward from the roots of the mountain-slopes. — *Morison*. A great herd of swine feeding. They were the property either of Gentiles, or of Jews engaged in a traffic which was unclean according to the Mosaic law. — *Schaff*.

12. The devils besought him . . . Send us, etc. How could there, it is asked, be such a desire on the part of the demons? Why should there not? we would answer. The wish might, on their part, be a mere outburst of wantonness. Or there might be eagerness for *any thing* on which to wreak their evil energy. They might be wishing, as Richard Baxter has it, "to play a small game, rather than none." Or there might be cunning malice in their intent, — malice toward Christ and toward all the other parties concerned. — *Morison*. They aimed at this, that they might move the owners of the herd, and the rest of the people of the country, to be discontented at our Saviour. — *Petter*.

13. Gave them leave. Why should Christ have permitted the evil spirits to enter the swine? (1) To show the disciples Christ's control over the movements of the spirits. (2) To test the Gergesenes. (3) To make the miracle more notorious, and thus to enhance the effect of the cured demoniac's preaching. — *Stock*. (4) The owners, if Jews, drove an illegal trade; if heathens, they insulted the national religion: in either case the permission was just. — *J. F. and B.* (5) We are at least on the right track in suggesting that only in some such way could the man be delivered from the inextricable confusion between himself and the unclean spirits in which he had been involved. Not till he saw the demoniac forces that had oppressed him transferred to the bodies of other creatures, and working on them the effects which they had wrought on him, could he believe in his own deliverance. Those who measure rightly the worth of a human spirit thus restored to itself, to its fellow-men, and to God, will not think that the destruction of brute life was too dear a price to pay for its restoration. — *Ellicott*. (6) He had the same right which he constantly exercises through the destructive agencies of nature, to do what he will with his own. His destroying cattle by murrain, cities by earthquakes, ships with their living freight by storm, is all a part of the same inscrutable mystery. — *Abbott*. The Devil cannot so much as trouble a swine without leave from God. — *Pool*. Ran violently [or rushed] down a steep place. Not a cliff, but a steep beach. — *Stock*. The declivity at the base of the mountain at Gersa is said to be almost perpendicular. "The bluff behind is so steep, and the shore so narrow, that a herd of swine, rushing frantically down, must certainly have been overwhelmed in the sea before they could recover themselves." — *Tristram's Land of Israel*. About two thousand. Immense herds of swine were kept in many provinces of the Roman Empire specially for the provisionment of the army. A heavy loss was certainly recognized by the people of the city. — *Cook*. Why should they have destroyed the herd of swine, and so deprived themselves, so to speak, of a terrestrial abode? Perhaps the act of the swine was the result of panic, and in spite of the evil spirits. It is the very nature of evil thus to outwit itself. — *Abbott*. Stupid, blind, self-contradicting, and suicidal, it can only destroy, and will rather involve itself in the common ruin than not destroy. — *Trench*. Choked in the sea. The wicked, Satan (Job 1:11), and his ministers and servants, are sometimes heard; and the very granting of their petitions issues in their greater confusion and loss. So was it now: these evil spirits had their prayers heard, but only to their ruin. They are allowed to enter into the swine, but the destruction of the whole herd follows; and that which they

14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

16. And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17. And ¹they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18. And when he was come into the ship ²he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great

them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they came to see what it was that had come to pass. And ¹⁵ they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with devils sitting, clothed and in his right mind, *even* him that had the legion: and they were afraid. And they ¹⁶ that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with devils, and concerning the swine. And they ¹⁷ began to beseech him to depart from their borders. And ¹⁸ as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with devils besought him that he might be with him. And he suffered him ¹⁹ not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great

¹ Matt. 8: 34. Acts 16: 39. ² Luke 8: 38.

dreaded would seem to have come upon them: they are driven perforce to the abysmal deep, which they most would have shunned. — *Trench*.

14. They that fed the swine [the herdsmen] fled, affrighted. The city. Gergesa, or Gadara, or both.

15. They come to Jesus. (Matthew says [8: 34], "Behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus.") Note the present *come*. The Evangelist begins to depict the scene as if he and we were present in the midst of it and looking on. — *Morison*. See him that was possessed. And (they) behold the demoniac sitting clothed and in sound mind. Note the word *behold*. It is more than *see*. They gazed upon the man. Sitting and clothed. There is a fine harmony between the statement that the demoniac was now clothed, and the statement in Luke that formerly he "ware no clothes" (8: 27). The contrast of the man's former condition sets off to advantage the marvel of his present state. — *Morison*. Right mind. Those who forsake their sins always come into their right mind, and see things as they are. When we see Jesus literally "casting out demons by a word," effecting deliverance to their captives, the evidence of Christ's sufficiency is complete. All things are in his hand. Lord over nature, providence, death, the grave, the world of spirits! He can protect the soul, also, even from its most subtle adversaries; can comfort it, train it, perfect it, and save it. In this faith we can rest; in this, find perfect repose. — *S. Hopkins*. They were afraid. They felt in the presence of a power which inspired them with awe and alarm. It might, for aught that they could comprehend, be something weird or "uncanny." — *Morison*. And, moreover, it was the terror of a guilty conscience. — *P*.

16. And also concerning the swine. A notable climax. The people who had witnessed the transaction tell the citizens what had been done for the demoniac and about the swine — their swine: that settled their minds. — *Cook*.

17. Pray him to depart. From fear of experiencing still greater harm. They did not realize how infinitely greater good he had done them in releasing two human souls from the dominion of the Devil. — *Kendrick*. The Devil would seem to enter into the hearts of the Gadarenes, as well as into the bodies of the swine. — *J. Ford*. Jesus had overcome the rage of the storm, that met him when approaching their coast. He had cast out the legion of devils that opposed his entrance into their country. The only thing which could effectually turn away the Saviour was the will of man. — *Mimpriss*. Christ appears never to have visited the country of the Gadarenes again. He does not abide where he is not wanted. — *Abbott*.

18. Prayed . . . that he might be with him. Was it that he feared, lest in the absence of his deliverer the powers of hell should regain their dominion over him, and only felt safe in immediate nearness to him? or merely that out of the depth of his gratitude he desired henceforth to be a follower of him to whom he owed this mighty benefit? — *Trench*.

19. Jesus suffered him not. To be a missionary for Christ, in the region where he was so well known and so long dreaded, was a far nobler calling than to follow him where nobody had ever heard of him, and where other trophies, not less illustrious, could be

things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

things the Lord hath done for thee, and *how* he had mercy on thee. And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

raised by the same power and grace. — *J. F. and B.* Go home to thy friends. The first act God requires of a convert is, "Be fruitful." The good man's goodness lies not hidden in himself alone: he is still strengthening his weaker brother. — *O. Feltham.* While he calls upon some to leave home and family to follow him, he bids this man to follow first the purely human feelings which had been re-instated in their natural rights within him; to return, sane and calm, to the family which he had abandoned as a maniac; and to glorify God among them, by telling them how Christ had wrought the mighty change, and giving them a living proof of it in his own person. — *Neander.*

20. In Decapolis (ten cities). The region (of ten cities east of the Jordan) of which this immediate district formed a part. The healed man became a preacher, not only where Christ had been rejected, but where he had not gone. His message was his own experience. — *Schaff.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Besides the usual *Notes on the Miracles*, consult Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew*, No. 27; Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, 3: 5; Wilberforce's *Sermons*, p. 107. On demoniacal possessions, see Olshausen's *Commentaries*, 1: 359. On the parallelism between demoniacal possessions and what in modern scientific language is called "moral insanity," see Abbott's *Jesus of Nazareth*, chap. 13; Ray's *Medical Jurisprudence*, chap. 7, pp. 202-260; Henry Maudsley's *Physiology and Pathology of the Mind*, chap. 3, pp. 306-316; Forbes Winslow's *Obscure Diseases of the Brain*, pp. 179-211. On the tombs at Gadara, see Hackett's *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 190; Porter's *Damascus*, ii. 54; Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 466; Miss Rogers's *Domestic Life in Palestine*, p. 108. There is a capital sketch of this miracle in *The Power of Grace*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts (ver. 34). If a revival of the Lord's work were sure to interfere with our property interests, isn't it possible that some of us would want the revival postponed? If we must empty our liquor-casks, or wind up our lotteries, or close our theatres, or abandon our tobacco-raising, as soon as the community felt the impulse of the Lord's presence, is it certain that we should not want the Lord to do his chief work in the next town? In war-time there was an enterprising New Englander who had a peripatetic embalming establishment just at the rear of the Federal army in Virginia. In expressing his growing regret of the terrible consequences of the prolonged hostilities, he said one day, — as if in evidence of his self-forgetful patriotism and humanity, — "I tell you, chaplain, I'd be right glad to have peace come, even though it would greatly interfere with my business." That man was just a little improvement on the hog-raising Gergesenes. Are there not some very good persons who would view almost any reform with suspicion if its progress must surely be the death of their present business? *Rev. H. Clay Trumbull in Sunday School Times.*

II. Miss Dix, who was so much interested in the insane, found that *prayer* and the singing of hymns always quieted their minds and calmed their spirits.

III. Evil is continually destroying itself, as these demons in entering the swine. So Haman hung himself on his own gallows. So liquor-sellers, in injuring their fellow-men, ruin their own bodies as well as souls, and often find their own sons are their victims. One has well said, "The Good has one enemy, the Evil; but Evil has two enemies, the Good, and itself." — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 2. We know an evil spirit by its impurity, low conversation, base deeds.
2. Vers. 3, 4. Could the demoniac break every chain in pieces, and shall not God dissolve the chains of sin? — *Bishop Taylor.*
3. We see the fearful damage sin does to man. Sin is known only by its finished work, — not by the first glass of wine, but by the delirium tremens; not by an hour's dissipation, but by the final disease and death.
4. No one can conquer the power of sin alone, more than he can stem Niagara.

5. Ver. 5. The sinner is ever harming himself.
6. Vers. 6, 7. There is a perpetual contest in the sinner between his better desires and his evil nature, which gives him no real rest or peace.
7. There is a mighty moral power in goodness. "The veriest sick girl with this solar light (of goodness) is more than a match for Cesar without it." — *Joseph Cook*.
8. Ver. 8. Christ's work is to cast out all unclean spirits from the world.
9. Ver. 9. The powers and influences of evil are many and organized.
10. Ver. 12. We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms. — *Shakespeare*.
11. Vers. 14, 17. One soul is worth thousands of property.
12. Yet many would rather have riches that come from injuring their fellow-men, than poverty with the good of men.
13. Bad riches are almost sure to take to themselves wings, and fly away.
14. To leave sin is to come to one's right mind.
15. This man, restored, is a type of Christ's work for men.
16. Let every saved sinner testify to his friends what great things God has done for him.
17. Christ will not stay in a heart, a home or a town, where he is not wanted.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this lesson we have an example of how GOD DELIVERS US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND TRANSLATES US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON (Col. 1: 13). (1) *Describe the demoniac*; his separation from men; his uncleanness; his fierceness; his being overpowered of evil; his self-injury; his foreboding of torment; his unrest; his manifold nature; legion. (2) Show how all is a *type of the bondage of sin*. (3) *The way in which the demoniac was saved*: by coming to Jesus, against an overpowering influence; by visible relief at the word of Christ. Sometimes by the loss of property employed in a bad business. (4). We have *three effects of the cure*: 1. *On the man*, clothed, and in his right mind. 2. *On the Gadarenes*, who wanted Jesus to go away lest more people should be saved at the expense of their bad property. Jesus went, and never returned. 3. In sending out *a home missionary among all that people*.

LESSON XII. — MARCH 19.

POWER OVER DISEASE AND DEATH. — MARK 5: 21-43.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Be not afraid, only believe.* — MARK 5: 36.

TIME. — Autumn, A. D. 28. Probably in the afternoon of the same day that Christ healed the demoniac of Gadara.

PLACE. — Capernaum. At the house of Matthew; on the way to the house of Jairus; at the house of Jairus, — all within or near the city.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 9: 18-26. Luke 8: 41-56. See also Matt. 9: 10-17, for intervening incidents.

INTRODUCTION.

Having been besought by the Gadarenes to leave their country, Christ passes over the lake again to the western side, to Capernaum, where he was immediately surrounded by the multitude, who had been waiting for him. Being invited by Matthew to a feast at his house, he there held conversation with some Pharisees, and afterwards with some disciples of John (Matt. 9: 10-17. See Lessons IV. and V.). While yet speaking with them, Jairus, a ruler of the Capernaum synagogue, came to him, praying him to heal his daughter.

21. ¹And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea.

And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him: and

¹ Matt. 9: 1. Luke 8: 40.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Daughter of Jairus.** — Vers. 21-24. 21. Was passed over. From Gergesa. Unto the other side to Capernaum. Nigh unto the sea. He preached and

22. ¹ And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24. And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25. And a certain woman,² which had an issue of blood twelve years,

he was by the sea. And there ²² cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: *I pray thee*, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live. And ²⁴ he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.

And a woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

¹ Matt. 9: 18. Luke 8: 41. ² Lev. 15: 25. Matt. 9: 20.

worked near the seaside. The incident of the lesson took place at Matthew's house, which was in Capernaum, but may have been near the sea, while within the limits of the city.

22. There cometh. To Matthew's house, where he is giving a feast to Jesus, and many publicans. One of the rulers of the synagogue (probably of the synagogue of Capernaum). One of the elders and presiding officers, who convened the assembly, preserved order, invited readers and speakers. *Jairus*. Or *Ja-trus*, a significant Hebrew name, meaning *he will enlighten*.—*Morison*. When he saw him. After penetrating perhaps through the surrounding crowd, *he fell at his feet*: literally, *falls*. (Matthew says *worshipped*, i.e., revered him by falling at his feet; not necessarily denoting divine worship.) At his feet. Literally, *toward his feet*. With beautiful Oriental facility, he would drop upon his knees, and bring his forehead to the ground, *in the direction of the Saviour's feet*.—*Morison*.

23. And besought him greatly; i.e., in many words, or perhaps with many arguments.—*Alexander*. Little daughter. One word in the original, a diminutive of affection; compare the German *Töchterlein*.—*Schaff*. Luke tells us she was about twelve years old, and an only child. Lieth at the point of death. Mark and Luke speak of her as dying when the father came, St. Matthew as already dead. Yet these differences are not hard to adjust: he left her at the last gasp; he knew that she could scarcely be living now; and yet, having no certain notices of her death, he at one moment expressed himself in one language, at the next in another.—*Trench*. Come and lay thy hands on her. The language of the original is peculiar and broken, indicating great emotion. Hence "I pray thee" has been supplied, but the strong word "that" (in order that) should not be omitted. The best explanation is: He states the condition of his daughter "in order that coming thou mayest lay thy hands on her, in order that she may be made whole and live." He thus expresses his faith.—*Schaff*. Here is an instance of prayer for a temporal benefit; and that prayer which the ruler offered for his daughter twelve years of age, you may offer for your relatives. I have often said that in prayer we are to express to God every want that we feel, temporal, spiritual, or eternal. It is not your part to discriminate, and say, "I will not pray for this blessing, lest it be not for my good." It is the prerogative of Him who gives the blessing to determine what is for your good, and what is not. You pray for the blessing that you feel you most need, and leave God to give when and how he pleases.—*Cumming*.

24. Jesus went with him. So did his disciples (Matt. 9: 19), and much people, literally a crowd, as denoting not merely numbers, but a promiscuous gathering and throng or pressure. They had been listening to his teaching, and now followed to see what would be the result of Jairus' visit. Thronged. A word denoting no gentle pressure, but that they were suffocating, stifling him.—*Alexander*.

II. Woman with the Issue of Blood.—Vers. 25-34. 25. And a certain woman. Nothing is known of her. But Eusebius records a tradition that she was a Gentile, a resident of Cesarea Philippi (or Banias). It is reported that she caused to be erected in front of her residence a bronze monument in commemoration of her cure. It consisted of two statues, one representing herself in the attitude of supplication; the other, her Deliverer.—*Morison*. Elsewhere she appears under the name Veronica, who, in the presence of Pilate, proclaimed the innocence of Jesus, and on the way to Golgotha wiped his face with her handkerchief.—*Lange*. An issue of blood twelve years. The precise nature of the malady is of no importance. Instead of dwelling upon this point, the Evangelists direct attention to its long continuance and hopeless state.—*Alexander*.

26. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

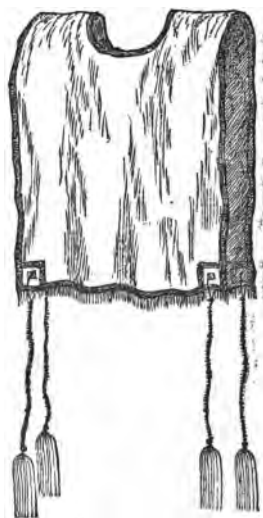
and had suffered many things 26 of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, having heard the 27 things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched his garment. For 28 she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole. And straightway the 29 fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of

26. Suffered many things of many physicians. Luke, himself a physician, also states that she "had spent all her living on physicians," without any good result. Mark emphasizes the fact that she "suffered" at their hands, and grew worse instead of better. In those days such diseases especially would be poorly treated, and treated without tenderness, first because the patient was Levitically *unclean*, second because she was a *woman*. Our Lord's conduct was a protest against both these. — *Schaff*. Had spent all. Men are very far from doing as much for the health of the soul as for that of the body, and from giving all for eternal salvation, as they willingly spend all they have for temporal life. What wonder, then, if such persons are nothing bettered, but rather grow worse? — *Quesnel*.

27. When she had heard of Jesus. Heard what a wonderful being, and in particular what a wonderful healer, he was. She had, it would appear, made herself acquainted with his character and conduct, with the *facts* of his career, and had thence come to believe that he was full of a divine and gracious energy. — *Morison*. Came in the press behind . . . touched his garment (Matthew and Luke give it, "hem or border of his garment"); or rather, "*approaching from behind, touched the tassel of his outer robe.*" The word which we translate by "the hem of the garment" denotes one of the four tassels or tufts of woollen cord attached to the four corners of the outer robe. — *Godet*. The ordinary outer Jewish garment was a square or oblong piece of cloth (worn something like an Indian blanket, or with a hole in the centre for the neck) with tassels at each corner, and a fringe along the two edges. A conspicuous deep-blue thread was required to be in the tassels (Num. 15: 38-40 Deut. 22: 12). The object of this tassel and fringe, Chrysostom well compares to the binding of a thread around the finger as a reminder. — *P*. One of the four tassels hung over the shoulder at the back, and this was the one which the woman touched. — *J. F. and B*.

28. For she said. Matthew, "within herself;" but it is possible that she may have murmured it again and again as she tried to get through the crowd. — *Schaff*. If I may touch but his clothes. She was timid, not doubtful. It is implied that she wished only to touch some part of his clothes, no matter which. She may have looked for some magical influence, but twelve years in the hands of physicians in those days would certainly excuse such a thought. — *Schaff*. The faith was a most real faith (see ver. 34), yet was it not altogether unmingled with error. It would appear as though she imagined a certain magical influence and virtue diffused through his person and round about him, with which if she could put herself in relation, she would obtain that which she desired. And it is probable that she touched the *hem* of his garment, not merely as the extremest part most easily reached, but attributing to it a peculiar virtue. — *Trench*. The error of her view was overborne, and her weakness of apprehension of truth covered, by the strength of her faith. And this is a most encouraging miracle for us to recollect when we are disposed to think despondingly of the ignorance or superstition of much of the Christian world: that He who accepted this woman for her faith, even in error and weakness, may also accept them. — *Alford*.

29. She felt in her body that she was healed; lit., "knew (i.e., by feeling) in the



FRINGED GARMENT.

30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that ¹virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31. And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

her plague. And straightway ³⁰ Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power ~~proceeding~~ from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, Who touched my garments? And his disciples ³¹ said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked ³² round about to see her that had done this thing. But the ³³ woman fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all

¹ Luke 6: 19; 8: 46.

body." The first clause tells of the cessation of the ordinary symptom of her disease: this points to a new sense of health. — *Schaff*. When faith, under a sense of its need, touches Christ, the virtue that comes from him gives some such feeling to the soul. — *Ker*. The cure was effected by an exercise of Jesus' will, which responds to the woman's faith in his miraculous power, not through the mere touching of the garment. The result was instantaneous and complete. — *Meyer*.

30. **Knowing . . . that virtue (healing power) had gone out of him.** Within that nature there was the inherent power to cure diseases, and a knowledge of all that was going on. He permitted power to go forth for the healing of the woman when her faith was properly exercised. — *George W. Clark*. His healing was an overflow, not an effort, — a work so unconscious and so utterly passive that it seems like a miracle spilt over from the fulness of his divine life, rather than a miracle put forth. — *Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D.* **Who touched my clothes?** Not because he was ignorant, for his searching glance showed to the woman that she was not hid from him (Luke 8: 47), but to draw out her confession of her faith. For illustration of similar questions, see Gen. 3: 9; 4: 9. 2 Kings 5: 25. Luke 24: 19. — *Abbott*. If she had been allowed to carry away her blessing in secret as she purposed, it would not have been at all the blessing to her, and to her whole after spiritual life, that it now was, when she was obliged by this repeated question of the Lord, to own that she had come to seek, and had found, health from him. — *Trench*. Christ will have himself openly confessed, and not only secretly sought. Our Christian life is not, as it is sometimes called, merely a thing between ourselves and God, but a good confession to be witnessed "before all the people." — *Alford*.

31. **And his disciples said.** "Peter and they that were with him" (Luke 8: 45). It was much like Peter thus to speak, both for himself and as spokesman for the disciples. But Jesus affirmed that some one had touched him, implying a touch of intention and faith, and not a mere thoughtless and accidental *pressing* of the multitude. — *George W. Clark*. **Who touched me?** It has often been observed how *she* only *touched* with the touch of faith: the others, though as near or nearer in body, yet lacked that faith which is the connecting link between Christ's power and our need; and thus they crowded upon Christ, but did not touch him in any way that he should take note of. And thus it is ever in the Church: many *press* upon Christ, his in name, near to him and to his sacraments outwardly; yet not *touching* him, because not drawing near in faith, not looking for and therefore not obtaining life and healing from him, and through these. — *Trench*.

33. **But the woman.** Each word indicates the inward struggle of the woman. She knew that what had been done in her was a result of her own act, without permission from Jesus, and she could scarcely hope that the faith which suggested it would be accepted as genuine. — *Cook*. **Fearing and trembling.** As if she had stolen her recovery. — *Isadore Clarius*. Alarmed, as a humble, shrinking female would naturally be, at the necessity of so public an exposure of herself, yet conscious that she had a tale to tell which would speak for her. — *J. F. and B.* Perhaps the woman feared Christ's anger and his rebuke for polluting him by her touch; or, possibly, the indignation of others in the crowd, in which she had joined without in any way indicating her uncleanness. — *Abbott*. **Knowing what was done in her.** A sense of her cure brought her forward to testify to and for Christ. So always the sense of pardon and acceptance will lead the trembling believer to full confession and to an open testimony for Christ. It will embolden the timid to speak of the gospel, even before crowds. — *Jacobus*. **Told him all the truth.** This, though it tried the modesty of the believing woman, was just what Christ wanted, her public testimony to the facts of her case, — the disease with her abortive efforts at a cure, and the instantaneous and perfect relief which her touching the great Healer had brought her. — *J. F. and B.*

34. And he said unto her, Daughter,¹ thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35.² While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?

36. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

the truth. And he said unto 34 her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

While he yet spake, they 35 come from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? But Jesus, not heed- 36 ing the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the syna- gogue, Fear not, only be- lieve. And he suffered no 37 man to follow with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And 38

¹ Matt. 9: 22. Mark 10: 52. Acts 14: 9. ² Luke 8: 49.

34. **Daughter.** A term of affection, but, no doubt, as employed by our Saviour, implying that all that was spiritually distinctive in her character had been derived from himself. — *Morison*. Thy faith hath made thee whole. Literally, *thy faith hath saved thee*. — *Ellicott*. In the higher and in the lower sense, soul and body. Her faith, of course, had not been the efficient cause of her cure. Christ's power had been that. And behind his power was his person, the real healer. But her faith was the condition on her part, that rendered it fitting on his part to put forth his curative efficiency. Hence it might be represented as having in a certain subordinate respect "made her whole." — *Morison*. More than once has a person first learned that he had faith when the Saviour told him of it. — *Bengel*. Go in peace. The true meaning of the Greek is, "Go into peace." — *Ellicott*. Not fearing and trembling, nor in uneasiness lest the trouble, return. — *Abbott*. And be whole. A different word from that used in ver. 28, giving an assurance of restoration to perfect health, such as was still needed by the woman. — *Cook*.

III. **Healing of Jairus' Daughter.** — Vers. 35-43. 35. While he yet spake i.e., these words of comfort to the woman. How long these moments of delay must have seemed to the anxious Jairus! — *Clark*. Seemingly there was delay, fatal delay. But, just so far as the resurrection of the dead is a mightier miracle than the healing of the sick, just so far did the delay enhance and illustrate the glory of his mission. — *Robertson*. There came . . . certain which said. According to Luke, a single messenger; Mark's language indicates more than one. Probably others, volunteers, accompanied the messenger. Thy daughter is dead. It is clear, then, that the immediate friends did not believe in the modern theory that this was a case of syncope. — *Abbott*. Why troublest thou the Master (or the Teacher)? The underlying thought is: The case is now beyond the help of Jesus, who might have cured, but cannot raise her. — *Schaff*. This might be the language of those who truly recognize in Jesus a Master. I should rather regard it as an indication that only the ruler had faith in Christ, and that his friends, who could not dissuade him from appealing to our Lord while his daughter lived, hoped to do so by the report of her death. — *Abbott*.

36. As soon as Jesus heard the word. Here the emphasis should be placed on the first words, — *as soon as* the tidings came, on that very instant the Lord spake; thus leaving no room or place for a doubt to insinuate into the father's mind, before he had pre-occupied him with a word of confidence and encouragement. — *Trench*. Be not afraid, only believe. Words of unchanging preciousness and power! How vividly do such incidents bring out Christ's knowledge of the human heart and tender sympathy! (Heb. 4: 15) — *J. F. and B.* "Only believe," *I ask no more*. How sublime the self-possession of our Lord! How complete the self-consciousness that he held in his hand the key of all the resources of infinite power! Relatively to that power, it was of no moment whether the child was dead or alive. Could our Lord, or could any honest and worthy individual, have thus spoken to the agitated father, if his power had been limited? — *Morison*.

37. He suffered no man to follow him. The whole multitude doubtless followed Jesus to the house. It was after the exclusion of the mourners (ver. 40) that he suffered only the three disciples and the parents to go with him into the room where the dead lay. — *Abbott*. See Luke 8: 51. They were excluded, because to behold wonders, certain inward qualifications, a certain state of heart, are required. — *Robertson*. Peter, and James, and John. It is hardly to be questioned that this selection was determined by the personal peculiarities of these three, that made them more ready than the others to under-

38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but ¹ sleepeth.

40. And they laughed him to scorn. ² But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel (I say unto thee,) arise.

42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly. And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was. And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were amazed straightway with a great a-

¹ John 11: 11. ² Acts 9: 40.

studies the real meaning of Christ's words and works, and to sympathize with him in his trials and griefs. — *Andrews*. Two classes alone were admitted, — those who, like Peter, etc., lived the life of courage, moral purity, and love; and they who, like the parents, had had the film removed from their eyes of grief. — *Robertson*.

38. *Seeth the tumult*. There was always a horrible clamor at Eastern funerals; and the preparations had begun, for early burial was usual among the Jews. — *Schaff*. *Them that wept and wailed*. Including professional mourners, in Matthew designated as "minstrels." In the Orient, yet more than with us, mourning customs are conventional. Fashion dictates them. The friends of the dead beat their breasts, make the house resound with their lamentations, cover their heads, cut their flesh, put on the habiliments of grief, and rend their garments. Professional women, skillful in the simulation of grief, are hired to swell the songs of lamentation on these occasions (Jer. 9: 17, 18. Amos 5: 16). — *Abbott*.

39. *The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth*. In the order of things over which he presides, death is death no longer, but assumes the character of a temporary slumber. — *Godet*. To speak of death as a sleep, is an image common, I suppose, to all languages and nations. Thereby the reality of the death is not denied, but only the fact implicitly assumed, that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening. — *Trench*.

40. *Laughed him to scorn*. The company of mourners was certain that the child was dead, and, understanding neither the language nor the power of Jesus, laughed him to scorn, in derision. With the consent of the ruler Jesus orders them to leave, and they depart. He had entered the house (ver. 39), now he enters the room where the child was. — *George W. Clark*. *Where the damsel was lying*. Probably the large upper room near the roof, which seems to have been used on such occasions (comp. Acts 9: 37, 39). — *Alexander*.

41. *Talitha-cumi*. This is Aramaic, the language generally spoken by the common people in Palestine at the time of Christ. — *Abbott*. *Talitha*, in the ordinary dialect of the people, is a word of endearment to a young maiden, so that the words are equivalent to "Rise, my child." — *Alford*. *Damsel*. St. Mark has the diminutive, expressing tenderness, "little maiden." — *Cook*. It is in harmony with the sublime familiarity of Jesus on all the points of this subject, which men had consecrated with all solemn symbols as the one great dread of the race, that he should have used the dear mother-call to this little girl, — *Talitha-cumi*, — as if she only had slept soundly for a night. . . . Over every silent grave the ear of faith can hear the words, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me never dies*. — *C. H. Hall*.

42. *Straightway*. Not after a time, but instantaneously. *Walked*. An evidence of her complete restoration. *They were astonished with a great astonishment*. St. Mark dwells emphatically upon the astonishment felt by the parents (see St. Luke), but shared doubtless by the three apostles. It was the first miracle which manifested their Master as Lord over death and life, the first which prepared their minds for the resurrection. — *Cook*.

43. And ¹he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

mazement. And he charged ⁴³ them much that no man should know this: and he commanded that *something* should be given her to eat.

¹ Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 17:9. Mark 3:12. Luke 5:14.

43. No man should know it. The reason for the prohibition was doubtless to avoid a notoriety, which might excite the people and give occasion for tumultuary proceedings. — Cook. Jesus never forbade the propagation of his *teachings* (Meyer), but only those things which produced excitement without doing good. Something . . . be given her to eat. She needed food; her strength would be recovered by natural means; at the same time it was an evidence that she was actually restored. Matthew, who was probably *outside* with the other disciples, tells of the spreading of the report of this miracle; while Mark, informed about it by Peter, who was inside, gives the particulars of what occurred there. — Schaff.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Besides the ordinary works on the miracles, see Dr. G. W. Bethune's *Sermon*, on "A Healing Touch of Christ;" Robertson's *Sermons*, series 2, on "The Healing of Jairus' Daughter." On Eastern mourning, see Tournefort's *Voyage into the Levant*, 1:99; Dr. Clark's *Travels in Russia*, 1:251; Howson on the *Miracles*, 1:23, 223; *Tract*, by Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D., "The Ministry of Healing."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. There is a modern but famous French picture, called *The Repose in Egypt*, engravings of which have found their way into our art-stores. It represents a sphinx with upturned face, as if still asking the great questions of life; and appropriately standing on the edge of the African desert, to represent the desert state of the world, without God and immortality. Darkness broods over the scene, with only the far-off stars of tradition and philosophy shedding their dim light upon the dark desert of life. The artist represents Mary, with the child Jesus, in their flight from Herod, as reposing between the arms of the sphinx, with Joseph and the ass near by on an oasis. The light of the picture flows from the child Jesus, and makes bright the oasis and the nearer sands; and rays from his face stretch far away over the barren wastes, and penetrate through the darkness. So indeed does Jesus shine upon this dark world of sin and sickness and death. — P.

II. Who touched me? There is a vast difference between the *world-touch* and the *faith-touch*. Christ has untold blessings for all; but what men receive from him depends on the faith and love with which they come to him. It is the common experience. We receive from nature according to what we bring to nature. Multitudes of men have seen apples fall, but only Newton received from the falling apple the law of gravitation. Men still go through the world with "eyes and no eyes," and one writes a book where another sees nothing. Arthur Helps compares some men to the birds on a telegraph-wire, who are utterly unconscious of the messages of sorrow and joy, of business and friendship, — messages sometimes affecting whole nations, which are passing right under their feet. It needs the battery and connecting instruments in order to read what passes on the wire. It needs hearts of love and faith, longings for holiness, and the spirit of prayer, if we would receive the blessings which Christ has for us all. — P.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 22. It is right to pray for temporal as well as spiritual blessings, — for whatever we want.
2. We should act with as much energy as those who expect every thing from themselves; and we should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect every thing from God. — Colton.
3. The simplest and most obvious use of sorrow is to remind us of God. — Robertson.
4. Ver. 24. We should not stop for set times and places, but seek Jesus wherever we can find him.
5. Ver. 26. We are utterly unable to save ourselves from sin and trouble.
6. All human ways of getting rid of sin are "physicians of no value."
7. Vers. 27, 28. Strong faith, though mingled with error, brings the blessing. Gold is gold still, though mingled with sand.
8. Ver. 31. It is the heart of faith and love that brings blessings from Christ.
9. People may live with Christ, in the midst of his work and worship, and yet not be healed by him.

10. Ver. 34. This woman teaches us what is true faith, — faith that sends us to Christ, touches him, is earnest, works, confesses, loves.

11. Ver. 36. The greatest gifts are as easy to Jesus as the smallest.

"Thou art coming to a King.
Large petitions with thee bring."

12. Christ's delay in answering our prayers is to give us greater blessings.

13. Ver. 37. Special privileges are granted to those who live nearest to Jesus.

14. Ver. 36. Death is but a sleep to the disciples of Christ.

15. Ver. 40. Opposition of enemies often brings higher proof to the truths of religion.

16. Ver. 41. Christ is the resurrection and the life.

17. It is the intention of a miracle to manifest the divine in the common and the ordinary.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

By the two examples in this lesson we are taught THAT FAITH IS THE CURE FOR ALL HUMAN ILLS, AND THE NATURE OF THAT FAITH. (1) We see *the dying girl*, vers. 21-24, and *faith* leading her father to Jesus for help. (2) *The suffering woman*, vers. 25, 26, comes to Jesus, having sought cure as earnestly as we should seek salvation; but seeking in vain, as we often seek from the law, and good works, and good resolutions, the cure for sin. (3) *The faith cure*, vers. 27-34, showing the nature of true faith, — strong, humble, patient, confessing, and in Jesus. (4) We see certain *trials of faith*, vers. 35, 36, in the delay of Jesus while the child was dying, and in the report of her death; but the trials were to lead to greater blessings. (5) *The rewards of faith*: first to the disciples, by receiving this privilege of being with Jesus; and, second, to Jairus, whose daughter Jesus brought to life.

LESSON XIII. — MARCH 26.

REVIEW OF THE QUARTER'S LESSONS.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

I. The whole school can have a general exercise in concert by means of the Review Exercises given in many question-books and lesson-papers, or by using the titles and Golden Texts.

II. It is an excellent thing to have a written review at some other hour than the regular school exercises, and let the scholars write out the answers to three questions on each lesson, either from printed slips or questions asked from the desk.

III. In a class review it is well to question till each scholar has a clear, definite knowledge of the main outlines of the quarter's studies, embracing nearly two years of Christ's ministry. The leading *dates, places, and persons* should be made familiar. Then unity can be given to the lesson by means of *one subject*, around which the main features of the lessons arrange themselves: as, —

SUBJECT. — HELPS TOWARD THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

1. Our need of help. Let the scholars tell what lessons teach our *sinfulness*; what incidents illustrate the *nature of sin*; what *diseases, dangers, temptations, troubles, errors of doctrine*, are referred to in the lessons as showing the common needs of men.

2. Our Saviour. Let them tell the lessons and incidents which set forth the character of Jesus as a Saviour, the *forgiver of sins*, the *friend of sinners*, the *teacher of truth*, the *helper in danger* and trouble, the deliverer from Satan, the *cleanser from evil*, the *giver of peace*, the *resurrection and the life*.

3. First acts of religion. Find the incidents which teach or illustrate the duties of *repentance*, of *prayer*, of *following Jesus*, of *doing God's will*, of *trying to save men*.

4. The means of grace. In this quarter's lessons instructions are given, or examples placed before us, of some of the leading means of grace. In what lessons, and by what incidents, are we taught correct ideas about *attending church*, *keeping the sabbath*, *ways of receiving and using God's word*, *fasting*, *praying*, *working for others*, *communion with Christ*, *letting our light shine*?

SECOND QUARTER.

From April 2, to June 25, 1882.

LESSON I. — APRIL 2.

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE. — MARK 6: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.* — MATT. 10: 40.

TIME. — Autumn of A. D. 28, and early winter of A. D. 29. This second rejection of Christ at Nazareth (vers. 1-5) was soon after the healing of Jairus' daughter (our last regular lesson), autumn, A. D. 28. The sending out of the twelve followed very soon, and their labors extended through several weeks of the autumn of 28 and early winter of 29.

PLACE. — (1) Nazareth. (2) The towns and villages of Galilee. From what village he sent the apostles out, is unknown.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (16th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (33d year).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Jesus at Nazareth (vers. 1-5) with Matt. 13: 54-58. Sending out of the disciples (vers. 6-13) with Matt. 9: 35-38; 10: 1-42; 11: 1. Luke 9: 1-6.

INTRODUCTION.

The last regular lesson of the first quarter was the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus, at Capernaum (Mark 5: 21-43). Immediately after this, on his return home (Capernaum) from the house of Jairus, Christ heals two blind men and a dumb possessed, giving the Pharisees new occasion to say that he cast out devils through Satan. Matthew alone (9: 27-34) mentions these incidents. Jesus then, accompanied by his disciples, goes into Lower Galilee, again visiting Nazareth, where he is the second time rejected.

1. And ¹ he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.	And he went out from ¹ thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his dis-
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¹ Matt. 13: 54. Luke 4: 16.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Second Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth. — Vers. 1-6. **1. And he went out from thence.** From Capernaum. Came into his own country. Nazareth, in Galilee; his home for many years. — *Maclear*. It was only a journey of seven to ten hours. He staid in Nazareth several days, no doubt in his mother's house. — *Geikie*. The works wrought in the interval (since his first rejection, nine months before, April, A. D. 28), the effects of his personal influence, the progress made in spite of all opposition, might be expected to work upon the minds of the Nazarenes so far as to prepare them for listening to him, notwithstanding their former rejection. Natural sympathy would draw him thither. His sisters, probably married to Nazarenes, still dwelt there. — *Cook*. He doubtless yearned to proclaim the New Kingdom to the population among whom he had lived so long. His disciples. The reference is doubtless to *the twelve*. Follow him. Either on a subsequent day (*Ellicott*), or they accompany him in the capacity of followers on the same day. — *Morison*. Their presence at Nazareth was likely to produce a strong effect. Our Lord could no longer be regarded as an unknown youth with no recognized position.

2. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, ¹From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, ²the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon?

ciples follow him. And when ³the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and *what mean* such mighty works wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the ³son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas,

¹ John 6: 42. ² Matt. 12: 46. Gal. 1: 19.

He came with a suite of adherents, some of whom must have been known, if not personally yet by repute, to the Nazarenes. Another special reason for noticing their presence was that in the course of his journey the disciples were to be sent forth for the first time as missionaries. — *Cook*.

2. When the sabbath day (i.e., the seventh day, or Jewish sabbath, our Saturday) was come. This implies that one day or more elapsed between his arrival and his public teaching. It had been the instinctive practice of Jesus, from early childhood, to attend all the synagogue services; and he was still suffered to do so, in spite of the opposition he had excited. When sabbath came, therefore, he went to morning worship. — *Geikie*. He began to teach in the synagogue. The synagogues of the Jews were the parish churches, where they worshipped in their various quarters for ordinary occasions when they need not go up to Jerusalem. — *Jacobus*. Most probably there would be only one in so small a place. But in all the Jewish synagogues there was a fine freedom of speech allowed; and there would be no objection, therefore, to one like Jesus, who had already achieved for himself a name as a popular and somewhat remarkable rabbi, addressing the assembled congregation. — *Morison*. Many hearing him. Or, "the many," i.e., the greater part of those present. Some remained silent, either accepting his teaching or withholding all expression of surprise. — *Cook*. Were astonished. "Were struck with amazement." Saying. In the course of our Saviour's address (see ver. 4). Hence the propriety of the preceding expression, "began to teach." He had not proceeded far ere he was interrupted. There was less of decorous repression of remark and criticism in a Jewish auditory than in a British congregation. — *Morison*. From whence hath this man these things? The *things*, namely, that he was saying. The simple people marvelled at his facility and power of utterance, and at the weighty character of the thoughts that were conveyed by the utterances. Such phenomena of oratory are always captivating to the masses, particularly when the orator is known to have had none of the advantages of school-learning. — *Morison*. What wisdom is this? or, What is the wisdom given unto him? i.e., imparted or inspired from some source, — a sneer at his wisdom as belonging to another rather than himself. They admitted the existence of great intellectual and rhetorical superiority: but they stood in doubt in reference to the origin of such superiority; was it from above, or from beneath? — *Morison*. Such mighty works. As the Evangelist notes in ver. 5, that no mighty work had been done in Nazareth, these must refer to what had been reported there. — *Ellicott*. They do not venture to deny his wisdom or his miracles, but, by wondering at them, really bear witness to them. This admission left them inexcusable, both intellectually and morally, for not receiving Jesus as the true Messiah. — *Alexander*. For thirty years the Son of God resided in this town, and went to and fro in its streets. For thirty years he walked with God before the eyes of its inhabitants, living a blameless, perfect life. But it was all lost upon them. They were not ready to believe the gospel when the Lord came among them, and taught in their synagogue. They would not believe that one whose face they knew so well, and who had lived so long eating and drinking and dressing like one of themselves, had any right to claim their attention. — *Ryle*.

3. Is not this the carpenter? This, and the Jewish custom which required every father to teach his son a trade, whatever pursuit in life he might eventually follow, indicate that Christ worked in his earlier years at the carpenter's trade with his father. — *Abbott*. St. Mark's is the only Gospel which gives this name as applied to our Lord himself. — *Ellicott*. In Matt. 13: 55, it is said that they called him the *carpenter's son*. There is no contradiction: some called him one, some the other name. The word translated *carpenter* here is of wider meaning than our word "carpenter." It includes all workers in wood, our cabinet-maker as well as carpenter. — *P*. Christ, as a carpenter, shows us that daily toil can be exalted. Labor is not glory, or worship, or life, as the poet says, in itself; but when it is pervaded (1) by mind, (2) by a moral motive, love, truth, faith, the lowliest work is

and are not his sisters here with us? And they ¹ were offended at him.

4. But Jesus said unto them, ² A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5. ³ And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6. And ⁴ he marvelled because of their unbelief. ⁵ And he went round about the villages, teaching.

and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him. And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could ⁵ there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

And he went round about the villages teaching.

¹ Matt. 11: 6. ² Matt. 13: 57. John 4: 44. ³ Gen. 19: 22; 32: 25. Matt. 13: 58. Mark 9: 23. ⁴ Isa. 59: 16. ⁵ Matt. 9: 35. Luke 13: 22.

exalted into the highest, by being done for the love of Christ, and to help and save those for whom he died.—*P.* The general expression of contemptuous incredulity is followed by a still more invidious allusion to his connections and associations, equivalent to saying, "We know all about this boasted wonder-worker and instructor, who and what he is, and whence he drew his origin,—that is, among ourselves, to whom he now assumes such vast superiority."—*Alexander.* Son of Mary. Though neither of the Evangelists speak of Joseph's death, yet it may be plainly inferred that Christ was now called "the son of Mary" (see Mark 6: 3), because of her being a widow. (See Luke 8: 19. John 2: 12, and 19: 25-27).—*Jacobus.* Brother of James, etc. . . . sisters here with us. These four were either (1) own brothers and sisters of Jesus, children of Joseph and Mary; or, (2) children of Joseph by a former marriage; or, (3) cousins (brothers taken in the wider sense of near relatives), children of Clopas and Mary, sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19: 25, with Mark 15: 40). It is impossible to decide which; but the weight of Protestant authority, on the whole, favors the idea that they were own brothers of Jesus. Others believe that Joseph and Clopas were dead, and the two widowed sisters lived together with all their children at Nazareth, in one family; and so, though but cousins, they were all brought up as brothers and sisters. (See Library References).—*P.* James. By ecclesiastical writers he is also called James "the just," and "the Bishop of Jerusalem." (He was not the same as the Apostle James.) It is certain from the Acts of the Apostles, that this James, after the dispersion of the disciples and the departure of Peter (Acts 12: 17), occupied the most prominent position in the Church of Jerusalem, and stood at the head of the Jewish converts. He was the author of the Epistle of James. He was sentenced to be stoned by the Sanhedrim, A.D. 62.—*Schaff's Bible Dictionary.* *Joses*, or *Joseph*. Nothing is known of him. *Juda*, or *Judas*, probably the author of the Epistle of Jude. *Simon*. We have only his name given here and in Matthew: nothing further is known of him. They were offended. They were led into error and sin with regard to him.—*Schaff.* The grand fundamental article of all their creed was that the Messiah should be a temporal prince. They expected such a one as should disenslave them from the Roman yoke. With such fancies and expectations, how would they receive a person bearing himself for the Messiah, yet in the poor habit of a mechanic, and preaching to them nothing but humility, self-denial, and contempt of those temporal glories which they had made the very design of their religion?—*Robert South.*

4. A prophet is not without honor. This was a common proverb, that Christ applied to his case; showing that he was rejected on these natural principles, not because they had not evidence in his works, but because they had prejudice against his lowly origin among men.—*Jacobus.*

5. And he could there do no mighty work. His power was not changed. His miracles were not feats of magic, but required two conditions to call them forth,—an opportunity, and a sufficient moral purpose. "Unbelief" prevented both. The unbelieving would not come for healing: to heal such would be contrary to his purpose in the miracles, the demonstration of his spiritual power. Hence he "could not." When men do not believe, they do not give him the opportunity to save them, and to save the unbelieving is contrary to his purpose, and impossible.—*Schaff.* May we not say, that this essential principle still holds good; that, by its very nature, his salvation can be made available only to such as are willing in humble trust to accept it; and that, where that trust is wanting, it is still true that Christ cannot do the mighty work of salvation?—*Abbott.* Unbelief, and contempt of the divine word, drive Christ out of the heart, as they did out of his own country.—*Quesnel.*

6. He marvelled. Our Lord does not marvel at other human things generally; but he does marvel, on the one hand, at faith, when, as in the case of the centurion, it overcomes

7. ¶¹ And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits:

8. And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse:

And he called unto him the 7 twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits; and 8 he charged them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money

¹ Matt. 10: 1. Mark 3: 13, 14. Luke 9: 1.

in its grandeur all human hinderances, and, on the other, all unbelief, when it can, in the face of numerous divine manifestations, harden itself into a wilful rejection of himself. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. And he went. He now seems to have left Nazareth, never to return to it, or preach in its synagogue, or revisit the home where he had so long toiled as the village carpenter. — *Maclear*. Went round about the villages. On the evening of the day of his rejection at Nazareth, or more probably on the morrow, our Lord appears to have commenced a short circuit in Galilee, in the direction of Capernaum. — *Maclear*.

II. The Sending Out of the Twelve. — Vers. 7-13. After long wanderings and continuous trials, the twelve were now, in their Master's opinion, in a measure prepared to work by themselves in spreading the new kingdom. — *Geikie*. Two reasons appear to have led to this commission of the twelve: first, the growing eagerness of the people to hear the news of the kingdom could not be satisfied by one preacher; second, the growing opposition of the Pharisees made apparent the necessity of not only appointing, but training, men to preach Christ's gospel. St. Matthew gives a touching reason for the mission of the twelve. It was because he pitied the multitude, who were like harassed and panting sheep without a shepherd, and like a harvest left unreaped for want of laborers (Matt. 9. 36-38). — *Cambridge Bible*. There is something greater than preaching — this is, to make preachers; there is something greater than performing miracles — this is, to impart the power to perform them. It is this new stage which the work of Jesus here reaches. He labors to raise his apostles up to his own level. — *Godet*.

7. The twelve. The call and ordination of the twelve to be *apostles* had taken place some time previously: in connection with it the Sermon on the Mount was delivered (see Lesson VI., First Quarter). — *Abbott*. And began to send them. The first sending of the apostles into the world may be likened to the little seed-corn. He began to send; the end of his sending is the end of the world. — *Lange*. Two by two. That they might help and encourage one another, and take counsel together. Union is strength. — *Morison*. Power. The word signifies both "power" and "authority" or "right." Even if it were not evident that here both ideas are included, we find both words expressly used in the parallel passage of Luke (9: 1), — "He gave them power and authority:" in other words, he both *qualified* and *authorized* them. — *Ellicott*. The gift was probably conveyed by some form, — by laying-on of hands. — *Meyer*. Over unclean spirits. Demons. Mark gives special prominence to such dispositions as the most extraordinary miracles of healing, and as such representing all the rest which were equally included in this apostolical commission (Matt. 10: 1. Luke 9: 1, 2), and as symbolical of all their mission in the world. — *Alexander*. These cures are not the end: they are only the means designed to lend support to their message. The end is to proclaim throughout Galilee the coming of the kingdom of God, and at the same time to make the people feel the grave importance of the present time. — *Godet*.

8. Commanded them. Now follows a brief summary of the charge which the Lord proceeded to give them on this occasion, and which is recorded at far greater length by St. Matthew (10: 5-42). — *Maclear*. Nothing for their journey. Make no preparations, such as are ordinarily made on the eve of a journey: set out just as you are. God will provide for all your wants. — *Godet*. The open hospitality of the East, so often used as the basis for a dissemination of new thoughts, would be ample for their maintenance. — *Farrar*. A staff only. A walking-stick as used in journeys upon foot to support and ease the traveller. — *Alexander*. St. Matthew (10: 10) gives "neither staves:" i.e., they were to take one only. — *Ellicott*. Scrip. A "wallet" or "small bag" (comp. 1 Sam. 17: 40). It was so called, perhaps, because it was designed to hold scraps, trifling articles, scraped off, as it were, from something larger. It was part of the pilgrim's or traveller's equipage. Shakspeare uses it in "As You Like It," III., ii., 171. "Though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage." — *Maclear*. The scrip of the Galilean peasants was of leather, "the skins of kids stripped off whole, and tanned by a very simple process," used especially to carry their food on a journey, and slung over their shoulders. — *Thomson's Land and the Book*, p. 355. Money. Literally *brass*, or rather *copper*, said to be the first ore that was wrought. Copper having been early used for money, the word has sometimes

9. But ¹be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10. ²And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

in their purse; but *to go* shod with sandals: and, *said* *he*, put not on two coats. And *he* said unto them, Whosoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart

¹ Acts 12: 8. ² Matt. 10: 11. Luke 9: 4; 10: 7, 8.

that generic meaning, as it has in this place, with specific reference, no doubt, to coin of the lowest value. — *Alexander*. In their purse. Literally, *into the girdle*, implying a custom, still prevailing in the East, of using the belt, which keeps the flowing dress together, as a purse or pocket. — *Alexander*.

9. Be shod with sandals. Such as they had on at the time, without waiting for shoes especially adapted for the journey. — *Schaff*. In Matthew they are directed not to wear *shoes*; here, to be shod with sandals. The shoe of the ancients resembled the modern shoe (it was of softer leather than the sandal); the sandal was simply a sole of leather, felt, cloth, or wood, bound upon the feet by thongs, — the shoe-latchet of Mark 1: 7, and was for hard service); the former was for more delicate use. — *Abbott*. Put on two coats. Literally, tunics. The tunic (Greek) was the inner garment, worn next the skin, usually with sleeves, and reaching to the knees. It answered rather to our shirt than to our coat. Two tunics were sometimes worn, probably of different stuffs, by persons of rank, wealth, or official position. — *Abbott*. The entire "outfit" shows that they were plain men, to whom there was no extraordinary self-denial in the matter or the mode of their mission. They were going to their brethren (Matt. 10: 5), and the best way was to throw themselves on their hospitality. They were accustomed to live in about this way. — *Land and Book*.



SCRIP, STAFF, AND SHOES.

From these provisions too much has sometimes been deduced respecting the support of the Christian ministry and their true method of operation. The commission was for a temporary service; the requirements were adapted to the customs of society; the apostles were cast upon the hospitality of the people, partly to try their own faith, partly to try that of the people, and measure their readiness to receive the gospel, partly because they thus conformed to the habits of the ancient prophets (1 Kings 17: 9. 2 Kings 4: 8), and so assumed an office and position with which the people were measurably familiar. In subsequent directions for their later ministry, Christ gave the apostles commands directly opposite to certain precepts here (com. Matt. 10: 5 with Acts 1: 8), and his own practice did not ordinarily conform to the precepts here given, forbidding provision. These directions involve this much: viz., that (a) the ministry are to seek, as well as to save, the lost, and therefore are to go after them; (b) they are to give freely, and not make a merchandise of the gospel; (c) they are to avoid all ostentation in attire and luxury in food; (d) they are to depend on the voluntary contributions of the people for their sustenance, as did the Old-Testament priesthood to a large extent, and the Old-Testament prophets altogether (Num. 18: 20, 21. Deut. 10: 8, 9; 18: 1, 2); (e) their dependence is that of a laborer who *earns* his bread, not that of a beggar who receives it as a gratuity. — *Abbott*.

10. In what place soever ye enter into a house. On their arrival at a city, they were to settle down in the first house to which they obtained access, which, however, was not to exclude prudence and well-ascertained information (Matthew); and, once settled in a house, they were to keep to it, and try to make it the centre of a divine work in that place. — *Godet*. This injunction was meant to exclude fastidious and restless changes. — *Farrar*. There abide. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, must invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy. The Evangelists . . . were sent, not

11. ¹ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, ² shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13. And they cast out many devils, ³ and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

thence. And whatsoever place ¹¹ shall not receive you, and they hear ye not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them. And they ¹² went out, and preached that men should repent. And they ¹³ cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

¹ Matt. 10: 14. Luke 10: 10 ² Acts 13: 51; 18: 6. ³ Jas. 5: 14.

to be honored and feasted, but to call men to repentance, prepare the way of the Lord, and proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They were, therefore, first to seek a becoming habitation to lodge in, and there abide until their work in that city was accomplished. — *The Land and the Book*, p. 347.

11. Whosoever shall not receive you . . . shake off the dust. It was a custom of the Pharisees, when they entered Judea from a heathen country, to shake off the dust of the land as a testimony that they had no part or lot with heathenism. The apostles, if rejected, were to turn from the city or house that rejected them, and hold no further intercourse with it. Is the Christian minister, then, to refuse all intercourse with and all second attempts to win those who reject Christ in the first presentation? No! because these are not rules for the permanent ministry, but for a specific and necessarily rapid mission. — *Abbott*. A testimony against them. By this symbolical action they vividly shook themselves from all connection with such, and all responsibility for the guilt of rejecting them and their message. Such symbolical actions were common in ancient times, even among others than the Jews. — *J. F. and B.* More tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. 13: 13; chaps. 18, 19. The cities that stood out in the history of the world, as most conspicuous for their infamy, were yet less guilty (as sinning less against light and knowledge) than those who rejected the messengers of the King. — *Ellicott*.

12. They went out, and preached that men should repent. This is one-half of the brief, unambitious narrative of the first apostolic tour of the apostles. — *Morison*. Went out. Going out from the Lord's presence, or the place where he delivered these instructions, they proceeded to fulfil them, not at random or confusedly, but on a systematic method, going about or through the country and among the villages, or from town to town. — *Alexander*. Men should repent. The same message which had been already brought by John the Baptist and by Christ himself. The repentance thus preached was not simply sorrow or compunction, as a part of individual experience, but that great moral revolution, which was to precede as well as follow the Messiah's advent, as predicted by the ancient prophets. — *Alexander*.

13. In this verse we have the other half of the Evangelist's report of the first apostolic tour. — *Morison*. Anointed with oil. (*Peculiar to Mark*.) To suppose that the oil was used medicinally, is contrary to the whole tenor of the narratives. It was "the vehicle of healing power committed to them" (*Alford*), an external sign such as our Lord sometimes used to connect himself and the person cured. It was probably also a symbol of anointing by the Holy Spirit. — *Schaff*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Not without honor save in his own country. For the same reason that the proverb is true, that *No man is a hero to his own servant*. Why? Because greatness is an invisible spirit; and, when the symbols and pageantries of greatness are removed, it seems as if the greatness had been laid aside with them. It is hard to believe that a hero or a

saint, who eats and drinks as we do, of smaller and homelier body than ours, who gets weary and sick, is really so much greater or better than we. So Cassius thought of Julius Cesar, whom he once saved from drowning, and who, when sick in Spain, cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius, like a sick girl;" and he could not see the greatness which all the world since has seen, but said,—

"It doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone."

II. Preach the gospel. Scott, in one of his poems, refers to the beautiful custom of ancient Scotland of assembling their clans by means of the *fiery cross*. A light cross of wood was charred at its point, and the flames quenched in the blood of a goat. This was sent around to the villages and homes of the clan, each one sending it on to his next neighbor, with only the name of the meeting-place. And every one was bound under fearful anathemas to obey the sign.

"When flits this cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!"

So is Christ's cross, scorched with his sufferings, stained with his blood, the summons to every disciple to go forth and preach the gospel.—*P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. Every one should seek that his religion should be believed and honored at home.
2. Vers. 2, 3. The world is full of prejudices against the truth.
3. We should judge of a truth, not by the circumstances of the teacher, but by the truth itself.
4. Christ honored daily toil by being a carpenter. The best men may be in the lowliest positions.
5. Ver. 4. We see how apt men are to undervalue things with which they are familiar.
6. Many of the best and greatest men the world has ever known have risen from social obscurity.
7. Ver. 5. Unbelief prevents us from receiving many a blessing for ourselves and for the church.
8. Ver. 6. Christ disciples still go on preaching, whether people believe or not.
9. Ver. 7. The worker for Christ receives his power and authority from him.
10. Vers. 8, 9. We should do our work in the simplest way, without pomp or show, lest men's attention be called away from the truth.
11. Ver. 11. We are utterly without excuse if we refuse to obey Jesus Christ.
12. Vers. 12, 13. The gospel faithfully preached is sure of success.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We have here VARIOUS WAYS OF TREATING THE GOSPEL. (1) *The gospel preached at home*, among neighbors and friends, vers. 1, 2. (2) *The gospel rejected without reason, but from prejudice*; as it usually is rejected, if rejected at all, vers. 2-4. (3) *The result of this rejection*,—that their unbelief would not allow him to do much for them, vers. 5, 6. (4) *The gospel preached in all parts of the country*, vers. 6-11. Christ preached it, and sent out the twelve to preach. Note their methods of work. (5) *The gospel received. It was successful in its two forms*,—healing for the body; repentance and conversion for the soul.

LESSON II.—APRIL 9.

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—MARK 6:14-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*—Ps. 37:12.

TIME.—John was beheaded in the latter part of March, or beginning of April, A. D. 29, while the twelve apostles were still on their mission in Galilee. The words of vers. 14-16 were spoken soon after.

PLACE.— John was put to death at Macherus, a fortress and castle at the southern extremity of Perea, on the borders of Arabia. The feast held by Herod, at which Herodias demanded the head of John Baptist, was most probably held in this castle.

RULERS.— Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea. Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.— Matt. 14: 1-12. Luke 3: 19, 20; 9: 7-9.

INTRODUCTION.

John the Baptist, born in the summer of B. C. 5, and living more than thirty years in retirement in the wilderness, began his public ministry in the summer of A. D. 26. He preached for nearly two years, when he was imprisoned by Herod, March, A. D. 28; and, after a year in the dungeons of Macherus castle, was murdered by Herod, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. At the time of his martyrdom the disciples were still on their mission in Galilee (as set forth in our last lesson); and Herod, having returned to his capital, Tiberias, on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, heard the rumors of the wonder-working prophet from Nazareth.

14. ¹And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad :) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

And king Herod heard ¹⁴ thereof; for his name had become known: and he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him.

¹ Matt. 14: 1. Luke 9: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

14. **King.** Herod was not strictly and technically *king*, like his father. He was only *tetrarch*, meaning originally, "ruler of a fourth part," but afterwards, as here, any tributary prince. But, as he was really sovereign in his own fraction of the old kingdom, the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea, he was popularly, and by courtesy, called king. **Herod.** Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great. His father at his death, shortly after the birth of Christ, left his kingdom in three parts to his sons, the three Herods. The mother of Herod Antipas was Malthakè, a Samaritan, who was also the mother of Archelaus and Olympias. He was thus of Gentile origin, and his early associations were Gentile, for he was brought up at Rome with his brother Archelaus. He married first a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia; and afterwards, while his first wife was still living, he married Herodias, wife of his half-brother Philip, who was living in a private station, and must not be confused with Philip the tetrarch of Iturea. Cruel, scheming, irresolute, and wicked, he was a type of the worst of tyrants. Herodias was his worst enemy: she advised the two most fatal errors of his reign, — the execution of John Baptist, which brought him into enmity with the Jews; and the attempt to gain the royal title, the result of which was his fall and banishment. — *A. Carr.* **Heard of him; i. e.,** Christ. His attention was now first specially called to Jesus. Till Herod's conscience troubled him for murdering John, he had taken no thought about Jesus. But how could Jesus have been so long active in one of Herod's provinces, followed by great multitudes, performing daily the most wonderful works, and his residence only a very few miles from Tiberias, where the king kept his court, and yet his fame never reach the royal ears? The most ready explanation would be, that during his ministry Herod had been absent from Galilee, either on a visit at Rome, whither he went about this time (seeking the title of king), or had been engaged in hostilities with Aretas (the father of his former wife), and thus remained in good measure ignorant of what was taking place. If, however, he were in Galilee during this period, his ignorance of Jesus finds a sufficient explanation in his own personal character. He was a lover of ease and pleasure, and a man who occupied himself more in erecting fine buildings than in public affairs. — *Andrews.* **Spread abroad.** Made manifest or conspicuous. **John the Baptist** (whom he had just beheaded) was risen from the dead. The policy of the tetrarch connected him with the Sadducean priestly party, rather than with the more popular and rigid Pharisees. The superstitious terror of a conscience stained with guilt is stronger than his scepticism as a Sadducee (who disbelieved in the separate existence of the soul, and in the resurrection of the dead). — *Ellicott.* If we mistake not, that dissevered head was rarely thenceforth absent from Herod's haunted imagination from that day forward till he lay upon his dying bed. — *Farrar.* This shows us how one single flash of conscience will destroy a whole creed, when that creed is founded on falsehood. — *Cummings.* **Therefore; i. e.,** because he is risen from the dead. **Mighty works do show forth themselves.** Literally,

15. ¹ Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16. ¹ But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

18. For John had said unto Herod, ¹ It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

But others said, It is Elijah. ¹⁵ And others said, *It is a prophet, even as one of the prophets.* But Herod, when ¹⁶ he heard *thereof*, said, John, whom I beheaded, he is risen. For Herod himself ¹⁷ had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For ¹⁸ John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy

¹ Matt. 16:14. Mark 8:28 ² Matt. 14:2 Luke 9:19. ³ Lev. 18:16; 20:21.

works of power or the powers are active in him. During his life John wrought no miracles (John 10:41). Herod supposed that his resurrection had clothed him with new power. This opinion was shared by others (Matt. 16:14. Mark 8:28). Luke says (Luke 9:7-9) that Herod was perplexed, and implies that his belief in John's resurrection was imbibed from others. — *Abbott*.

15. Others said. Or rather, *But others said*. It is Elias, or Elijah. For he was expected to re-appear on the earth, to prepare the way for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. (See Mal. 4:5.) — *Morison*. And others said, . . . a prophet; like, or even as, one of the prophets. A twofold form of the report is recorded. One was, *A prophet*. Another was, *Like one of the prophets*. Elias, too, was a prophet. But he stood apart on a peculiar pedestal, as "the forerunner," and as thus pre-eminently "the prophet." Some, who could not imagine that Jesus was so great a personage, yet supposed that he might very likely be a prophet, say perhaps Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14). Others, who could not go quite so far, yet admitted that he was *like one of the prophets*, — one of them come to life again. — *Morison*. Ver. 16. Heard. Probably of these opinions, as well as of the acts which occasioned them. He said. By referring to Luke 8:3, and Acts 13:1, we find that Christ had followers from among the household of this prince, with whom Herod was likely to converse on a subject in which they were better informed than himself. — *Blunt's Veracity*. Whom I beheaded. The emphasis rests on "I." His guilty conscience suggested the thought, which was uttered to his servants (Matt. 14:2). Others held the same view (Luke 9:7). — *Schaff*. Josephus confirms the account of these forebodings when he tells us that after the utter defeat of Herod Antipas by Aretas, the people regarded it as a righteous retribution for the murder of John (Josephus, *Ant.* 18:5; 1, 2).

17. Herod . . . had sent forth . . . in prison. This arrest of John the Baptist had taken place a year previous, shortly before our Lord's second visit to Galilee (Matt. 4:12. Mark 1:14), the events of which are given by John, chap. 4. In prison. The prison was the castle of Macherus, nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea, on the border of Arabia. It was considered by the Jews as their strongest fortress, except Jerusalem. — *P*. Its ruins still exist. The wall can be clearly traced. There are also remains of two dungeons; the holes where staples of wood and iron had once been fixed are clearly visible. — *Abbott*. Here Antipas had a palace and a prison under one roof, as was common in the East. It was the ordinary arrangement in feudal castles. Herod was living in this border fortress in order to prosecute the war with his offended father-in-law Aretas. — *Carr*. Herodias' sake. Antipas had been, while at Rome, the guest of his brother Herod Philip. Here he became entangled by the snares of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and he repaid the hospitality he had received by carrying her off. Every thing combined to make the act as detestable as it was ungrateful and treacherous. Herodias, being the daughter of Aristobulus (a half-brother of Antipas), was not only the sister-in-law, but also the niece of Antipas (so that he was guilty not only of *adultery* but of *incest*). She had already borne to her husband a daughter, who was now grown up. Antipas had himself long been married to the daughter of Aretas, or Häreth, Emir of Arabia; and neither he nor Herodias was young enough to plead even the poor excuse of youthful passion. — *Farrar*. Philip. Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great and Mariamne the daughter of Simon, the high priest. He seems to have occupied a private station, and is to be distinguished from Philip the tetrarch of Iturea, another son of Herod the Great by his fifth wife, Cleopatra. Unlike the rest of his family, he was remarkable for justice and moderation. — *P*.

18. John had said . . . It is not lawful (Lev. 18:16; 20:21). The marriage was unlawful for these three reasons: (1) The former husband of Herodias (Philip) was still living. (2) The former wife of Antipas was still living. (3) Antipas and Herodias were already related to one another within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity. — *Alford*. St. Luke adds, chap. 3:19, that Herod was also reproved "for all the evil which he had

19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20. For Herod¹ feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21. ² And when a convenient day was come, that Herod³ on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee:

22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them

brother's wife. And Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him; and she could not; for Herod²⁰ feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and a holy, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, and the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee; and when²² the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and them that

¹ Matt. 14: 5; 21: 26. ² Matt. 14: 6. ³ Gen. 40: 20.

done." Josephus adds, that, besides this motive for imprisoning John, Herod was also afraid lest John should excite to a popular tumult. — *Lange*.

19. Had a quarrel; or, better, as it is rendered in the margin, "*had an inward grudge*" (or as in the New Version) against him. Would have killed him. The word in the original is much stronger, and denotes that she *had a settled wish* to kill him. Some versions read, She sought, or kept seeking, means to kill him. — *Maclear*. The unprincipled woman could not brook the outspoken integrity of the man of God, and schemed to get quit of his living voice and influence. — *Morison*. She could not. The opportunity had not yet come.

20. Herod feared John. He feared him as a man of God, whose death would be avenged. — *Cook*. Matthew says, "he feared the multitude." The two accounts are not inconsistent. His conscience and his fears supported each other. — *Abbott*. Think of the two men: the king, with all his lords and officers, his word law, could do as he liked; the prophet, alone, unprotected, at the king's mercy: which was afraid of the other? John bold and fearless, Herod trembling and alarmed. — *Stock*. A just man and a holy. The two words indicate — the first, righteousness as seen in relation to man; the second, the same element of character in relation to God. — *Ellicott*. Observed him. A wrong translation. The word does not mean *observed*, but *conserved*; *kept him safe*, as in the New Version. Herod protected John against the machinations of Herodias, and hence *preserved* him. — *Morison*. When he heard him . . . he did many things. His conscience being touched, he tried to make a compromise with it by doing a variety of good things from which he would otherwise have abstained. — *Morison*. The *New Version*, with many of the commentators, translates, "he was much perplexed," whether to obey his conscience or to continue in his sins. His soul was distracted. Heard him gladly. Not once or twice, but many times, Herod sent for his lonely prisoner, even as Felix sent for St. Paul, and listened to him as he reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and not only listened, but *listened gladly*. — *Maclear*. There was still a tender spot in Herod's conscience, which would give occasion to a perplexing collision between a sense of duty and a desire to enjoy the revelry that had established for itself a kind of prescriptive right, and a home, in his court. — *Morison*. But the constant influence of Herodias affected his mind; and truth, when it does not soften, hardens, so that, after a time, he was even desirous of putting John to death, but feared the people, because they regarded John as a prophet (Matt. 14: 5). — *Clark*.

21. A convenient day; i.e., for the purpose which Herodias cherished; not for Herod's feast, which took place at the fixed time. When Herod on his birthday. In imitation of the Roman emperors, the Herodian princes kept their birthdays with feasting and revelry and magnificent banquets. — *Maclear*. Made a supper, or banquet feast. The supper was the chief meal of the day, taken toward or at evening, and often prolonged into the night. The feast doubtless took place at Macherus, where John was imprisoned. For his lords; or, for his *grandees*, nobles, princes, officers of state. High captains; literally, *commanders of a thousand*, and applied in the New Testament to commanders and military chiefs (Acts 21: 31; 25: 23). These were doubtless Herod's highest military officers. The chief estates of Galilee; the chief men of the land generally. — *Clark*.

22. The daughter of the said Herodias; or, of Herodias herself. Not a common dancing-girl, but her own daughter, was put to this degrading task, for the accomplishment of her malignant purpose. — *Schaff*. Her name, according to Josephus, was *Salome*, a daughter by Philip, Herod's brother. She was afterward married to her uncle Philip, the tetrarch of Iturea (Luke 3: 1), and then to her cousin Aristobulus. Came in. It seems

that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23. And he sware unto her,¹ Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25. And she came in straightway with haste unto

sat at meat with him; and the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and

¹ Esth. 5: 3, 6; 7: 2.

to have been voluntary on her part, possibly unexpected even to Herod, but contrived beforehand by the crafty Herodias. — *Clark*. Danced. A luxurious feast of the period was not regarded as complete unless it closed with some gross pantomimic representation; and doubtless Herod had adopted the evil fashion of his day, but he had not anticipated for his guests the rare luxury of seeing a princess, — his own niece, a granddaughter of Herod the Great and of Mariamne; a descendant, therefore, of Simon the high priest, and the great line of Maccabæan princes; a princess who afterwards became the wife of a tetrarch, and the mother of a king, — honoring them by degrading herself into a scenic dancer. — *Farrar*. It was not customary for ladies of high rank to dance beyond the limit of the harem. The Oriental dance, still more than the Occidental ballet that was in use among the voluptuaries of Greece and Rome, was of a libertine character. It was seldom appreciated unless it made interruptions across the borders of decency. Indeed, Dr. E. D. Clarke imagines, that, "if the history of this exercise be traced to its origin, it will be found to have nearly the same character all the world over." (*Travels*, vol. v. p. 167.) Cicero, from his standpoint, said, "Scarcely any sober man dances, unless indeed he be mad." — *Morison*. She pleased Herod and them that sat with him; literally, *those who reclined with him*, viz., around the *triclinium*. The dancing would take place over against the vacant part of the squares of ground that were, on three sides, occupied with couches. The dancing-women of the East used tambours of various kinds, and sometimes had little bells attached to their fingers to make musical jingling. They sang too. The princess Salome's dancing and singing would, we may suppose, be more elegant and more captivating than any exhibition of mere professional Almeas. — *Morison*. And the king said to the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt (wishest), and I will give thee. Flushed with flattery, inflamed with wine, he felt in his most magnificent and generous mood, and wished to make the elegant *danseuse* the very best present she could desire. — *Morison*.

23. He sware unto her. Possibly Salome is at first surprised at the offer, and hesitates. But Herod even confirms his promise by an oath. The scandalous chronicles of the time were not without stories of extravagant rewards paid to mimes and dancers, and Herod might fancy that in this also he was reproducing the magnificence of the imperial court at Rome. But he probably hardly expected "the half of his kingdom" as the "whatsoever thou shalt ask." A jewel, a bracelet, a palace, or a city, were probably in his thoughts as what she was likely to ask, and he would gladly give. — *Ellicott*. Unto the half of my kingdom. He had no supreme power, and hence no half of a kingdom to give. But such were then the ideas of his excited and intoxicated brain. — *Clark*.

24. She . . . said unto her mother, What shall I ask? This is the question which every child is asking of its parents, and, in lesser degree, of teachers, friends, and companions. There are various ways of life before us, — ways that lead to heaven, ways that lead to hell; earthly good, honors, riches, and heavenly good, holiness, righteousness; and every child is asking which one he shall choose. — *P*. She said. She spoke her answer. We give it by words, by our example, by our unconscious influence. Every person is answering the children's question in some way, and helping to decide their lives and destiny. — *P*. The head of John the Baptist. She might have asked for robes, or jewels, or palaces, or whatever such a woman loves; but to a mind like hers revenge was sweeter than wealth or pride, and we may imagine with what fierce malice she hissed out the unhesitating answer, "The head of John the Baptizer." — *Farrar*. She did not care for her child, she did not care for righteousness; but she was doing wrong, and intended to continue doing wrong: therefore every one who troubled her conscience must be put of the way. — *P*.

25. Came in straightway with haste. Observe the ready alacrity with which she proved herself a true daughter of her mother. — *Maclaur*. By and by (immediately, forthwith). We hardly recognize in this word, so much has its meaning altered, St. Mark's

the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26. ¹ And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

asked, saying, I will that thou forthwith give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding 26 sorry; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her. And straightway the king sent 27 forth a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring his head; and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a 28 charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when 29 his disciples heard thereof, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

¹ Matt. 14:9.

familiar "forthwith" or "immediately." At the period when our version was made, it was, however (as we find in Shakspeare), in common use as an equivalent. — *Ellicott*. Her indecent haste, her hideous petition, show that she shared the furies of her race. Did she hope to kindle their merriment by the sense of the delightful wickedness involved in a young and beautiful girl asking that on one of the golden dishes which graced the board, should be given into her own hands the gory head of the Prophet whose words had made a thousand bold hearts quail? — *Farrar*. In a **charger**. An old English word for a large dish, so called from the load it sustained. The Greek word originally means a board, then a wooden trencher, and then any dish, without regard to the material. — *Alexander*.

26. **Exceeding sorry**. The Greek word thus translated is very strong, and denotes very great grief and sorrow. — *Maclear*. The feeling was doubtless a mixed one; chiefly *sorrow* (on his own account most) and *chagrin*, not without *anger*, at being thus taken advantage of: nay, even *alarm*; for he could not but feel apprehensive of the consequences of so unpopular an action. — *Mimpriss*. And *fear* of the avenging wrath of the prophet's God. — *P*. For his oath's sake . . . their sakes which sat with him. It was not so much his regard for the oath which he had taken (that, had it been taken in secret, he might have got over), but his shrinking from the taunt of the assembled guests, if they should see him draw back from his plighted word. A false regard for public opinion, for what people will say or think of us, was in this, as in so many other instances, an incentive to guilt instead of a restraint. — *Ellicott*. **He would not reject her**. A free phrase, meaning *to repudiate her demand, or to deny her request*. Was it right in Herod, it has often been asked, to choose not to deny Salome, and consequently to murder John? It is sufficient to answer, that it can never be right to do wrong. But what, then, of the obligation of his oaths? They could not bind him to do wrong. No power in the universe can ever make it right to do wrong. But is it not doing wrong to violate an oath? No, if the oath were itself entirely wrong. The making of such an oath is the first wrong-doing; the keeping of it is the second. When one has begun wrong, repentance, as even Seneca teaches, is more honorable than pertinacity. — *Morison*. Think what folly Herod's was, — more than half his kingdom for the sight of an immoral dance. And yet multitudes sell the kingdom of their souls for as mean a price, — a glass of wine, a little money, the gratification of passion, the pleasures of the table, pride. — *P*.

27. **An executioner; a soldier**; i.e., one of the body-guard whom the emperors had lately introduced as attendants, messengers, and executioners. — *Cook*. **Went and beheaded him**. The queen soon sees the head of her enemy; he is silenced at last. No, not yet: his blood has a voice in God's ear (Gen. 4:10); how shall she silence *that*? and one day the voice of God's broken law will accuse her; how shall she silence *that*? — *Stock*.

29. **His disciples**. John's. Matthew (14:12) relates that after the burial they went and told Jesus, showing their tender feelings toward John, and their confidence in Jesus as a friend to their master, and as one who would sympathize with them. **His disciples came and took up his corpse**. They have stood by him to the last; visited him in prison (Luke 7:18); tried to fulfil his wishes (Luke 5:33). Now they sadly bury the *headless* body cast out to them — *then*, what to do? where to go? What would their dead master wish them to do? They remember of whom the "faithful witness" testified. To him they turn now (Matt. 14:12). Are any of us sad? Let us "go and tell Jesus" likewise. — *Stock*. Observe that the death of John the Baptist appears to have put an end to the doubts and jeal-

ousies which his disciples entertained concerning Jesus during the Baptist's life. Observe, too, that it was sorrow which drove them to Christ, to whom they came not while their own teacher was with them. When the deprivation of our earthly teachers brings us to the heavenly, it is gain, not loss. — *Abbott*.

"Our pleasant vices," it has well been said, "are made the instruments to punish us;" and from this moment began for Herod Antipas a series of annoyances and misfortunes, which only culminated in his death years afterwards in discredited royalty and unpitied exile. — *Farrar*.

Thirty long years of preparation; then a brief and wonderful success, brimful of promise; that success suddenly arrested; all means and opportunities of active service plucked out of his hand. Then the idle months in prison, and then the felon's death! Mysterious, inexplicable, as such a life might look to the eyes of sense, how looked it to the eyes of God? The lips that never flattered have said of John, that, of those that have been born of women, there hath not arisen a greater; his greatness mainly due to his peculiar connection with Christ, but not unsupported by his personal character, for he is one of the few prominent figures in the sacred page upon which not a single stain is seen to rest. And, though they buried him in some obscure grave, yet for that tomb the pen that never traced a line of falsehood, has written the brief but pregnant epitaph: "*John fulfilled his course.*" Shall we say of this man that his life was unseasonably and prematurely cut off? No: his earthly task was done: he had a certain work assigned him here, and it was finished. Nor could a higher eulogium have been pronounced over his grave than this, that he had fulfilled the course assigned to him by Providence. — *Hanna*. The consciousness of Christendom has recognized his greatness. Art and poetry have symbolized it; and the work of the forerunner — the conviction that the preaching of repentance must precede that of forgiveness — has been reproduced in every great revival of religious life. — *Ellicott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Geikie's Life of Christ, chap. 26. *Farrar's Life of Christ*, 1: 391. *Josephus' Antiquities*, 18: 5. Herod's terrors of conscience are illustrated by Shakspeare's *Macbeth*, when he sees the ghost of the murdered Banquo (see *Hudson's Lectures*), and *Richard III.*; and by Scott's *Marmion*; *Sermons* by Robertson, 4: 332; by E. T. Fitch, "The Death of John the Baptist;" by Francis Atterbury, in *Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence*, "Terrors of Conscience." *Scripture Characters*, by R. S. Candlish. On vers. 26, 27, see Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, 4: 458.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. We find illustrations in the Scripture character of Jezebel, who tried to kill Elijah; Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and Judas, who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver.

II. Herod should have regarded justice to John as of more value than half his kingdom, — a thought further illustrated in a late speech by Gov. Rice of Massachusetts. — Now there are some things in this world that are of more value than money. Liberty is worth more than money. Law is worth more than money. Honor and public faith are worth more than money. Fidelity to one's country in the hour of that country's peril is worth more than money. — *Gov. Alex. Rice*.

III. Shakspeare represents Richard III. as seeing a vision in his sleep just before his last battle, in which appear the ghosts of those whom he had murdered. One by one they come, rehearse the crimes he had committed upon them, and cry, "Despair and die. Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow."

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 14. There is no peace to a guilty conscience. No washing of hands like Pilate's, no tears like Esau's, "not all the perfumes of Arabia," can take away the blood-stains of guilt.

2. The terrors of a guilty conscience sweep away as so many cobwebs the belief that there is no future existence, no future punishment.

3. Ver. 16. The faithful servant of God will be remembered, by the wicked with hate and fear, by the good with tender affection, by God with everlasting rewards.

4. Ver. 17. To reprove the sins of the great, is a minister's duty, though it may lose him his life.

5. Ver. 19. Men will either leave their sins, or will seek to destroy those who reprove them and trouble their consciences.

6. Luxury and wealth are consistent with the most unbecoming inward coarseness and cruelty.

7. The secret remorse and anxieties of the wicked, together with their real respect for persons truly pious, are so many attestations to the truth and reality of religion. — *Bengel*.

8. Ver. 22, 23. Many people give the whole kingdom of the soul for a little sensual enjoyment.

9. Ver. 24. What children shall choose and be, depends largely on the mothers.

10. Ver. 26. When the fear of man rules, to the exclusion of the fear of God, we have no safeguard against crime. — *Ryle*.

11. A short life, if it fulfils its mission, is successful. Few long lives have had such great influence on the world as the two years' ministry of John.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this lesson we have a picture of AN EVIL CONSCIENCE in its various phases, its feelings, its vain efforts after peace, while still holding on to sin. (1) *The evil conscience produces terror and alarm*, vers. 14-16 (see Illustrative). (2) *The evil conscience is awakened by reproof*, vers. 17-19. Many things reprove and awaken the conscience: good examples, warnings, Bible, etc. (3) *The evil conscience attempts to destroy the disturber of its peace*, vers. 21-29. Thus many find fault with Christians, to stay the force of their example. But (4) *All such efforts are in vain*. Herod's troubles increased; while John, who was slain, was the truly successful man.

LESSON III. — APRIL 16.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED. — MARK 6: 30-44.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.* — Ps. 132: 15.

TIME. — Near the close of the Galilean ministry, April, A. D. 29; very soon after the last lesson, and just before the time of the passover at Jerusalem, which began that year, April 17.

PLACE. — At a desert place (i.e., an uninhabited, lonely spot) called the plain of Butaiha, at the foot of the mountains on the north-eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, which was near to, and belonged to, the town of Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10). Some have supposed that there were two towns named Bethsaida, one on the eastern and the other on the western side of the Sea of Galilee; but it is much more probable that there was only one, which was situated on the Jordan, just at its entrance into the Sea of Galilee, and on both sides of the river. The part on the eastern side had been built up into a city by Herod Philip, and was called by him Bethsaida Julias, after Julia, Cesar's daughter. Near this point the feeding of the five thousand took place. The other part of the town was a small village on the western side of the Jordan, and was the Bethsaida of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 14: 13-21. Luke 9: 10-17. John 6: 1-14. This is the only miracle related by all the Evangelists. In St. John it prepares the way for the memorable discourse on the "Bread of Life."

INTRODUCTION.

Soon after the death of John the Baptist, the twelve disciples return from their tour of Galilee (see Lesson I., Second Quarter), meeting Jesus, probably, at Capernaum. Very likely their return at this time may have been determined by the death of John, which must have become very generally known. As usual, whenever Jesus, after one of his circuits, returned to Capernaum, the people flocked to see him from all the villages around, bringing to him their sick to be healed. So many came that they had not time even to eat. Jesus therefore crosses the Sea of Galilee, and seeks rest in the uninhabited parts of the eastern shore, with his disciples. But the people, seeing him depart by boat, immediately go by land from all the cities and villages, and meet him on his arrival at Bethsaida.

30. ¹And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31. ²And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for ³there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

And the apostles gather ³⁰themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto ³¹them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much

¹ Luke 9: 10. ² Matt. 14: 13. ³ Mark 3: 20.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Return of the Disciples. — Vers. 30-32. 30. The apostles (those sent forth). The only instance in Mark in which the word *apostles* is found. But, as Bengel remarks, it is with peculiar fitness that it is introduced. The disciples had just completed their first apostolic tour. — *Morison*. (For the meaning and marks of apostles, see Lesson VI., First Quarter, under ver. 14.) Gathered themselves together unto Jesus (probably at Capernaum, their home). The time and place of their meeting seems to have been selected previously to their going out. Told him all things. How delightful this confidence! They told him of their failures and of their successes; of their wisdom and of their folly; of their reliance and of their unbelief. — *J. Angus, D.D.* So should we go and tell Jesus all we do and speak. (1) It will comfort us to have his sympathy. (2) It will make us feel more clearly that we are workers together with him. (3) It will keep us from those things we are unwilling to tell. (4) It will bring us into more intimate friendship and acquaintance with Jesus. — *P.*

31. Come ye yourselves apart. He desired to separate the apostles from the multitude; and to give them, after their labors, a little period of repose, such as was not possible for them to obtain at Capernaum. Perhaps, also, he himself desired a few hours for solitary communion with God, for the refreshment of his own spirit, agitated by the death of John, whom he mourned as a faithful friend, and in whose untimely and violent end he saw the sign and foreshadowing of his own approaching death. — *Andrews*. Perhaps, also, he wished to avoid being the centre of the popular excitement which the death of John was likely to cause, and which we know, as a matter of fact, was so strong that men looked on all the subsequent trouble of Antipas and his wife as a retributive judgment for it. — *Ellicott*. Into a desert place. Not a sandy, barren spot, but one uninhabited and lonely. They crossed the Lake of Galilee (John 6: 1), and proceeded in the direction of Bethsaida-Julias, at its north-eastern corner (Luke 9: 10), just above the entrance of the Jordan into it. Bethsaida-Julias was originally only a village, but was rebuilt and enlarged by Herod Philip not long after the birth of Christ. He raised it to the dignity of a town, and called it *Julias*, after Julia the daughter of Augustus. Philip occasionally resided there, and there died, and was buried in a costly tomb (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii. 4: 6). To the south of it was the green and narrow plain of *El-Batthah*, "with abundant grass, and abundant space for the multitudes to have sat down" (Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 439). — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. Rest awhile. These words are full of tender consideration. Our Lord knows well that his servants are flesh as well as spirit, and have bodies as well as souls. He knows that at best they have a treasure in earthen vessels, and are themselves compassed with many infirmities. He shows them that he does not expect from them more than their bodily strength can do. He asks for what we *can* do, and not for what we cannot do. — *Ryle*. Activity of service is not the only way in which God is glorified. "They also serve who only stand and wait." Active duty is that which man judges most acceptable; but God shows us that in bearing and suffering he is also glorified. — *Horatio Bonar*. He permitted his disciples to take their rest; but he limiteth and restraineth his permission, saying, "Rest awhile." — *Archbishop Sandys*. Solitude and society are to have their turns, and to be intermixed. — *Seneca*. They needed this retirement (1) for rest; (2) for instruction in review of their labors; (3) for communion with God; (4) for that wider and truer view of their work which comes from seeing it as a whole from above, as a landscape is seen from a mountain-top. — *P.* There were many coming and going. — When the death of John the Baptist occurred, the popularity of Jesus was at its height in Galilee. Great multitudes follow him wherever he goes, and so throng him that he has no leisure even to eat. From every part of the land they come to listen to his teachings, and to be healed. Nor may we ascribe this concourse merely to curiosity and selfishness. These, doubtless, ruled in many; but that there was also, at this period, a large measure of faith in him, as one sent from God, appears from the fact that "whither

32. ¹ And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34. ² And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and ³ he began to teach them many things.

35. ⁴ And when the day was now far spent, his dis-

as to eat. And they went ³² away in the boat to a desert place apart. And *the people* ³³ saw them going, and many knew *them*, and they ran there together on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. And he came forth and saw ³⁴ a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And ³⁵ when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto

¹ Matt. 14: 13. ² Matt. 9: 36; 14: 14. ³ Luke 9: 11. ⁴ Matt. 14: 15. Luke 9: 12.

soever he entered, into villages or cities or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched it were made whole." At no period of his ministry did he stand in such high reputation with the people at large as a Teacher and Prophet. — *Andrews*. The proximity of the greatest of the festivals that were celebrated at Jerusalem (the passover, which began that year A. D. 29, on April 17) would give occasion for a large increase of visitors. (See John 6: 4.) — *Morison*.

32. **They departed into a desert place.** After the death of John a new era seems to begin in the life of our Saviour. — *P*. From this time he begins to act in view of his approaching death. More and more he withdraws himself from the crowds that follow him, and devotes himself to the instruction of his disciples. It is not now so much his purpose to gather new adherents, as to teach those already believing on him the great mysteries of his person and work. When, by his instructions, he has prepared them to understand his divine sonship, and what should befall him at Jerusalem, his Galilean ministry comes to its end. — *Andrews*.

II. **The Five Thousand fed.** — Vers. 33-44. 33. **Many knew him, or them.** Recognized him, or them, as they set sail. **And ran afoot, i.e., by land.** The words are used to point the contrast between the disciples, who had come in their boat, and the crowds who came by land. — *Ellicott*. **Out of all cities.** From all the cities, that is, all the large towns on or near the way. According to Josephus, there were six cities of considerable size on the thirteen miles of coast-line along the northern and north-eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. — *P*. **Outwent them.** That the people should be able to keep pace with those in the boat, will not appear strange if we remember the relative positions of Capernaum and Bethsaida. From the former city to the entrance of the Jordan, where we place Bethsaida, is, according to Robinson, one hour and five minutes, or about two and a half miles. The distance from the entrance of the Jordan, along the eastern shore to the point where the mountains approach the lake, is also about an hour. The whole distance, then, which the people had to travel, was not more than six or eight miles, and, from the conformation of the coast, could be as rapidly passed by those on the shore as those in the boat. — *Andrews*.

34. **When he came out; i.e., out of the ship.** On landing, he found the multitudes waiting for him: he gave up at once the purpose for which he had retreated to the desert, and, as ever compassionate, he began to teach them. — *Cook*. **Was moved with compassion.** The evil times, the restless uneasiness of all, the high religious excitement, the darkness of their spiritual condition, and the equal misery of their national prospects, combined to touch his soul with pity. They had brought all the sick who could be carried, or who could come: and, as he passed through the crowds, he healed them by a word or touch. They had greater wants, however, than bodily healing; and he could not let them go away comforted. — *Geikie*. **As sheep not having a shepherd.** They were destitute of teachers. They had no guides but the blind scribes and Pharisees. They had no spiritual food but man-made traditions. Let us never forget that our Lord is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He never changes. High in heaven at God's right hand, he still pities the ignorant and them that are out of the way. — *Ryle*. **He began to teach them.** John (6: 3, 4) says that Jesus went up into the mountain or highlands by the shore, and "there sat with his disciples," which was the posture of teaching (Matt. 5: 1). — *Clark*. This shows what he deemed their greatest need to be, although at the same time "he healed their sick" (Matt. 14: 14); compare Luke 9: 11. "*Began*" may mean, either that he began at once, or that he only began, the day being already far spent. The former is more probable. — *Schaff*. He could only *begin* to teach the great truths it would take them years to understand.

35. **The day was now far spent.** Much time having passed. It was the first even-

ciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed :

36. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread : for they have nothing to eat.

37. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, ¹ Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, ² Five, and two fishes.

39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent: send them away, that 36 they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat. But he answered and said 37 unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? And 38 he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And 39 he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And 40

¹ Num 11:13, 22. ² Kings 4:43. ³ Matt. 14:17. Luke 9:13. John 6:9. See Matt. 15:34. Mark 8:5.

ing (Matt. 14:15), the decline of day, about three o'clock in the afternoon. The second evening (ver. 47) began at sunset. — *Clark*. His disciples came unto him. John adds, that, previous to this, Jesus had addressed Philip, and asked, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? This he said to *prove him*; that is, to try his *faith*, to test the confidence of Philip in Himself. — *Barnes*. This is a desert place. And hence there would be no hamlets dotting it, in which the multitudes could get provisions for themselves. The farmers and workers did not, as a rule, live in detached houses, but clustered together in larger or smaller villages. — *Morison*. The time is far passed. Either, the time of day is late, or the time for the evening meal is past. — *Schaff*.

37. Give ye them to eat. Obedience seemed impossible; but they did obey, through Christ's power providing the means for them. Duty is measured by Christ's command, not by our resources. — *Schaff*. Sometimes it pleaseth God to require of us what we are not able to perform; either that he may show us what we cannot do, and so humble us, or that he may erect us to a dependence upon him which can do it for us. Nothing is more easy than to trust God when our barns and coffers are full; and to say "Give us our daily bread," when we have it in our cupboard. But when we have nothing, when we know not how or whence to get any thing, then to depend upon an invisible bounty, this is a true and noble act of faith. — *Bishop Hall*. Brethren, the day is wearing away; this is a desert place; there are hungry, perishing multitudes around us, and Christ is saying to us all, "Give ye them to eat." Say not, "We cannot; we have nothing to give." Go to your duty every man, and trust yourselves to him; for he will give you all supply just as fast as you need it. Take upon you readily; have it as a law, to be always doing great works, — that is, works that are great to you; and this in the faith, that God so clearly justifies, that your abilities will be as your works. Make large ventures. Trust God for great things. — *Horace Bushnell*. Two hundred pennyworth. This sum is mentioned mainly because it was an estimate of how much it would cost to give to each one a little (John 6:7). Some have supposed that this is the amount of money they had in their common treasury, but it seems rather to be mentioned as a sum *beyond* their ability to pay. It was equal to \$30, or £6, 5s.; a large amount of money then, since a denarius, or "penny," was the hire of a day's labor. — *Schaff*. Practically equivalent to \$200 worth in our time. — *Abbott*.

38. How many loaves have ye? The loaves here were of barley-meal made into small, thin cakes, baked hard on the side of the oven, so as to be broken. Five, and two fishes. Probably this was the whole stock of provisions then at the command of the disciples — no more than enough for one meal to them. — *J. F. and B.* The fishes were salt and dried, and used for a relish, according to a common custom of the country. Plain common food. Barley was the food only of the lower classes.

39. Sit down by companies; or in parties. Our word *parties*, in its convivial acceptation, is, as nearly as possible, a reproduction of the original term. The multitude was to be arranged in a *suite of parties*, no doubt *semicircularly* adjusted, after the form of Roman *triclinia*, or Grecian *symposia*. Such a semicircular or three-sided style of parties had become common among the Jews, being adopted from the Greeks and Romans; and hence the frequent reference, in the New Testament, to *reclining at meals*. — *Morison*. They were arranged in an orderly manner, thus avoiding confusion and deception, and making it easy to serve them and to count them accurately. Upon the green grass. It was in Nisan, "the month of flowers," and the slopes were rich with the soft green of the spring grass, — that

40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven,¹ and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42. And they did all eat, and were filled.

they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled.

1 1 Sam. 9:33. Matt. 26:26.

simplest and most touching lesson of the care of God for all nature. — *Geikie*. In this little cove the ships (boats) were anchored. On this beautiful sward at the base of the rocky hill the people were seated to receive from the hands of the Son of God the miraculous bread, emblematic of his body, which is the true bread from heaven. — *Thomson: The Land and the Book*. This plain east of the Jordan forms a triangle, the shore of the lake making one side, the Jordan the second, and the eastern mountains the third. — *Clark*.

40. **Sat down**; rather, reclined, as was the custom at their meals. **In ranks**. Our English "*in ranks*" does not reproduce the picture to the eye, giving rather the notion of continuous lines. Perhaps "*in groups*" would be as near as we could get it in English. — *Trench*. The primary meaning of the Greek word is, "a bed of flowers or herbs." — *Ellicott*. With their bright-colored Oriental dresses (gay red, blue, and yellow, which the poorest wear), these men presented an appearance which recalled a brilliant garden in the early summer. This picture thus presented by Mark, but lost in our English translation, is one of the pictorial characteristics of his Gospel, and is thought to have been derived from Peter, the most effective, and therefore probably the most pictorial, of all the apostolic preachers. — *Abbott*. They were symmetrically arranged in parallelograms, but of course with the fourth side free. They were ranged, that is to say, in a succession of *triclina*. — *Morison*. **By hundreds and by fifties**. This does not mean, as Fritzsche and Meyer suppose, *in companies which were in some cases a hundred in number, and in some cases fifty*. It represents such a symmetrical arrangement of the whole suite of parties, that, viewed, in one direction, *in rank*, from end to end of the respective triclina, there was a succession of semicircular hundreds, in tier beyond tier; whereas, when viewed laterally, or *in file*, there was a succession of fifties; viewed from front to back, there were fifty hundreds; viewed from side to side, there were a hundred fifties. Each hundred constituted a distinct *party*, or triclina, and would be separated by a convenient interval from all the other hundreds. — *Morison*.

41. **He looked up to heaven**. In prayer we should use such outward gestures as may most fitly serve to express the inward disposition and holy affections of our heart and soul. — *Petters*. **And blessed**. It was held by the Jews, that "he who partakes of any thing without giving thanks acts as if he were stealing it from God." The prayer of thanks was always pronounced by the father of the family; and Jesus never neglects it. — *Kitto*. The description recalls the Last Supper, of which this miracle is a premonition. The word "bless" in the Bible means God's favoring us, our asking favors of him, and our thanksgiving for such favors; the three senses are always more or less connected. The form of the Greek disconnects the "loaves" from the word "bless." The blessing was, therefore, mainly a thanksgiving (compare John 6:11), not simply a blessing of the loaves. — *Schaff*. **Brake the loaves**. The Jewish loaves, be it remembered, were of the form of thin cakes or crackers. **Gave to his disciples**. A beautiful illustration and foreshadowing of their future work of bearing the bread of life to perishing sinners. Mark alone says, **the two fishes he divided**, separated into parts, and distributed among them all. — *Clark*. He chose here as elsewhere — might we not say as everywhere? — to veil the workings of his omnipotence; to hide, as it were, the working of his hand and power, mingling it with that of human hands and earthly elements. — *Hanna*. As the widow's oil increased, not in the vessel, but by pouring out; as here the barley-bread multiplied, not in the whole loaf, but by *breaking and distributing*: so spiritual graces are best improved, not by keeping them together, but by distributing them abroad. — *Sanderson*.

42. **They did all eat . . . were filled**. They had come taking no thought, for three days at least, of what they should eat or what they should drink, only anxious to hear the word of life, only seeking the kingdom of heaven; and now the meaner things, according to the word of the promise, were added unto them. — *Trench*. Various suggestions have been made as to the mode of increase. It is safest to accept a supernatural increase without seeking to know the method, and then to seek and accept the spiritual lessons it teaches.

43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

And they took up broken 43
pieces, twelve basketfuls, and
also of the fishes. And they 44
that ate the loaves were five
thousand men.

The attempts to explain it as a natural event have been utter failures. The great lesson is: Christ the bread of the world; its type is the manna in the wilderness. — *Schaff*. This miracle is a symbol of the inexhaustible love of Christ himself; a symbol of that miraculous multiplying of sacred influences which, from one brief life of three active years, and one body pierced and broken on the tree, feeds innumerable thousands; a love which Christ imparts to his disciples, and which they in turn convey throughout the ages and to all lands. — *Abbott*.

43. They took up twelve baskets. Baskets were taken by Jews on journeying, to carry their provisions, etc., that they might not have to depend on Gentiles, and so incur the risk of ceremonial pollution. All the Evangelists alike here use *kophinoi* for the common wicker-baskets, in which these fragments were collected; and the word *spurides*, or "rope-baskets," when they speak of the feeding of the 4,000. Jesus, not only to show his disciples the extent and reality of what had been done, but also to teach them the memorable lesson that wastefulness is wholly alien to the divine economy, bade them gather up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost. — *Farrar*. A lesson of economy which is consistent with the greatest liberality. — *Lange*. An apt symbol this of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but, after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself far richer than it would have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing. — *Trench*.



BASKETS.

44. Five thousand men. Thus there was one loaf to every thousand men. Matthew adds, "besides women and children," of whom there were doubtless many. It was customary then, as now, in the East, for men to eat alone, reclining, and the women and children by themselves sitting. It was easy to number the men, who were arranged in companies of hundreds and fifties; but not the women and children, who perhaps sat around promiscuously. — *Bible Union Notes*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Bethsaida, see Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, 3:301; Thomson's *Land and the Book*, 2:29-32; and Andrews's *Life of Christ*, 211-217. Macgregor's Rob Roy on the Jordan, 327. MacDonald's *Miracles of our Lord*, 237. Trench on the *Miracles*. *Sermons on the New Life* by Horace Bushnell, p. 364. Spurgeon's *Sermons*, series 9:54.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The power which Christ gained over the souls of men, by feeding their bodies, has lately been illustrated by the famines in China and India, and the aid distributed to the starving people by the missionaries, by means of the food and money sent from Christian lands. Whole villages, in consequence, have turned from heathenism to the Christianity which was so abundant in good works.

II. God's overflowing riches, and our feeble faith, like that of the disciples, is illustrated in a sermon by Professor Finney. "A German writer gives this incident in the life of Johannes Bruce, the founder of the order of the Carmelites: One day the brethren found, when they had assembled for dinner, that their whole stock of food was a single piece of dry bread. They sat down; they asked God's blessing upon their crust. Then Johannes arose, and poured forth such words of encouragement and consolation concerning the love of Christ, and the great promises he had given his people, that all of them arose, delighted and refreshed, and, without partaking of their bread, returned to their cells. They had scarcely reached them when the bell rang at the convent-gate, and a man entered with a large basket of provisions, which were carried with a letter to the prior, who was on his knees praying. He read, the letter dropped from his hands, and he began to weep bitterly. The porter, surprised, said, 'Why do you weep? Have you not often said that we should weep for nothing but our sins?' Johannes replied, 'Brother, I do not weep without reason. Think how weak the Lord must see our faith to be, since he is unwilling to see us suffer want a single day without sending visible aid.'"

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 30. Let us tell all our needs, our failures, our hopes, to Jesus.
2. Ver. 31. We all need seasons of rest and retirement.
3. Ver. 33. Nothing can please God more than our importunity in seeking him: when he withdraws himself, it is that he may be more earnestly inquired for. — *Bishop Hall*.
4. Ver. 34. Jesus is ever moved with compassion toward sinners, and desires to save every one.
5. Ver. 37. Our duties and our privileges are not measured by what we can do of ourselves, but by what God is willing to do through us. We cannot turn the machinery of the factory, but we can let the water on to the wheel. We cannot push the steamship across the ocean, but we can let on the steam for the engine to do it.
6. Ver. 39. Note in how orderly a manner Christ does every thing.
7. Christ always asked a blessing upon his food.
8. Christ is the bread of life, satisfying the hunger of the soul for love, forgiveness, immortality, usefulness, progress, knowledge.
9. He that gives the gospel to others has more himself on account of the giving.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Jesus follows this miracle (John 6) by declaring that he himself is THE BREAD OF LIFE. We are led up to this subject by some delightful steps. (1) *The disciples go and tell Jesus all they have done* (ver. 30), as we may do. (2) Jesus shows his tender care by sending them to a retired place to rest a while (vers. 31, 32) for physical rest, for instruction and prayer. (3) *Jesus has compassion on the multitude* (vers. 33, 34), as he still has for all sinners. (4) *He feeds the multitude with miraculous food*, vers. 35-44. (5) By this we learn many lessons about the bread of life. (1) *Christ is that bread*. (2) *The overflowing abundance of his salvation more than enough for all*. (3) *It is to be given to the multitudes by the hands of his disciples*. (4) *The more they give, the more they have left*.

LESSON IV. — APRIL 23.

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA. — MARK 6: 45-56.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.* — ISA. 43: 2.

TIME. — April, A. D. 29. Immediately after the feeding of the 5,000 in the last lesson.

PLACE. — *Sea of Galilee.* The disciples crossing over toward Capernaum from the eastern shore near Bethsaida at the mouth of the Jordan, where the 5,000 had just been fed. Also the land of *Gennesareth* on the western shore, a fertile district four miles long, which contained Capernaum and other villages and towns.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 14: 22-36. John 6: 15-21.

INTRODUCTION.

Immediately after the miraculous feeding, the people wished to proclaim Jesus a king, and were ready to take violent steps for that purpose (John 6: 14, 15). The disciples were probably ready to join the people in an enterprise which would fulfil their remaining carnal expectations regarding the Messiahship of their Master. Hence our Lord dismissed them, sending them where they would feel the need of his presence. — *Schaff*. The people were charmed by this miracle; and it worked up to the highest pitch their enthusiasm in behalf of the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. Might not this, indeed, be taken as the commencement of his reign? Hitherto his acts had been those of individual beneficence. But here was a public act, performed in the sight of thousands, and of which thousands had shared the benefit. Who so fit to be their king as he who could banish want and labor from their borders, and revive the good old times when their fathers were fed by bread from heaven? — *Kitto*.

EXPLANATORY.

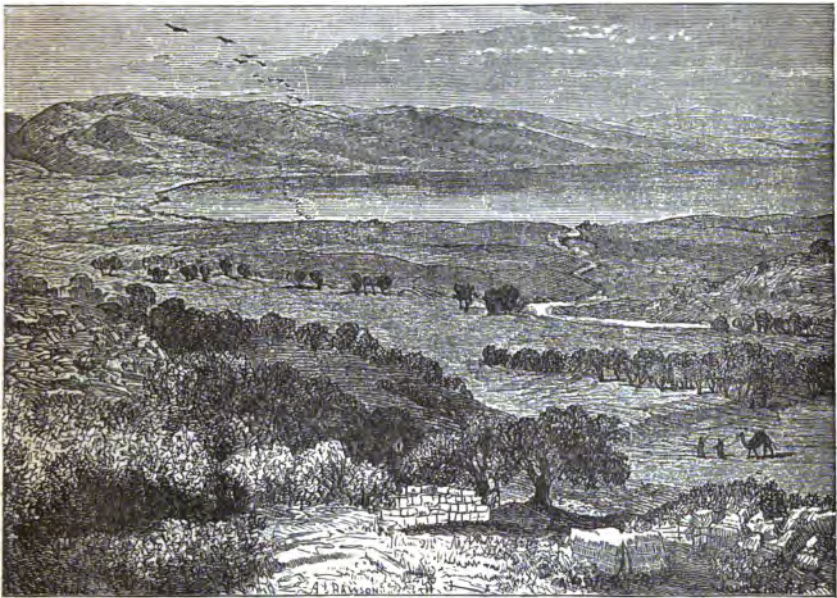
I. **Jesus at Prayer.** — Vers. 45, 46. 45. Straightway. Immediately; after satisfying to the full the wants of the multitude. He constrained his disciples. They were loath to go without their Master. And no wonder. A gentle but decisive constraint was required ere they would consent. — *Morison*. The reason why Jesus dismissed his disciples

45. ¹And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

And straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before *him* unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude

¹ Matt. 14: 22. John 6: 17.

was probably their sympathy with the enthusiasm of the people (see Introduction). In proportion as they had at first been encouraged by the success of their apostolic mission, must have been their depression when the tidings of John's martyrdom arrived. This sudden revulsion of feeling rendered them all the more susceptible to impressions such as those evoked by the scene which they had just witnessed. — *Lange*. They were most unwilling to be parted from their Master in this hour, as they deemed it, of his approaching exaltation. — *Trench*. To go to the other side before unto Bethsaida. John says, toward Capernaum. Capernaum was the ultimate point to be reached; but on the way there they were to sail along the coast in a north-west direction, and touch at Bethsaida, take into the boat Jesus, who would go there by land, and then sail south-west to Capernaum. — *P*. In the accompanying illustration we look down on the Sea of Galilee from the north. The ruins in the foreground are those of Bethsaida; the river is the Jordan. Probably in ancient



BETHSAIDA. (By permission of A. S. Barnes & Co.)

times the town of Bethsaida reached to or near the shore of the lake. The mountains in the distance are those on the eastern shore of Galilee, and the plain at their foot is the plain of Butaiha, where the 5,000 were fed. Christ was at or near Capernaum; sailed with his disciples across the Sea of Galilee to the plain of Butaiha, not far from Bethsaida. After the attempt of the multitude to make Jesus king, he bade them embark, and row along the shore toward Bethsaida (Mark 6: 45), where he proposed to meet them. A sudden wind rising, and blowing down the Jordan valley from the Lebanon range, drove the disciples' boat out into the lake; and it was while they were rowing back, against the wind, toward Bethsaida, where their Lord had promised to meet them, that he came out upon the waves for that purpose. Thus it is true that when they left Capernaum for the plain of Butaiha, in the morning, they were going over to a plain belonging to the city of Bethsaida, as Luke reports; and also true that when they started back in the evening, in the direction of Capernaum, as John reports (John 6: 17), they were also going toward Bethsaida, which lay on the northern shore. — *Abbott*.

46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47. ¹ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them; and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and ² would have passed by them.

away. And after he had ⁴⁶ taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray. And when even was ⁴⁷ come, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And seeing them ⁴⁸ distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea; and he would have passed by them:

¹ Matt. 14: 23. John 6: 16. ² Luke 24: 28.

46. **Sent them away;** i.e., the people. They were in an excited condition; hence great prudence, perhaps an exercise of some constraining power, was necessary. — *Schaff*. **Into a mountain to pray.** It was, we may reverently say, as if in this unwonted stir of popular excitement — not against him, but in his favor — this nearness to a path of earthly greatness, instead of that which led onward to the cross, he saw something like a renewal of the temptation in the wilderness, needing special communion with his Father, that he might once again resist and overcome it. And once again, therefore, he desired to pass through the conflict alone, as afterwards in Gethsemane, with no human eye to witness the temptation or the victory. — *Ellicott*. This night of lonely prayer is to be put alongside of the other instances in which, upon important emergencies, our Saviour had recourse to privacy and prayer, teaching us, by his great example, where our refuge and our strength in all like circumstances are to be found. — *Hanna*. The mountain-top was his chamber; the solitude around him its closed door, the evening sky over his head its open window. There he gathered strength from the will of the Father for what yet remained to be done for the world's redemption. How little could the men below, who would have taken him by force, and made him a king, understand of such communion! Yet every one of them must go hungry and thirsting in vain, until the door of that communion was opened for him. They would make him a king: he would make them poor in spirit, mighty in aspiration, all kings and priests unto God. — *George MacDonald*.

II. Stilling the Tempest. — Vers. 47-53. **47. When even was come.** The late evening, that extended from sundown onward. — *Morison*. In the Jewish division of the day there were two evenings, one commencing at 3 o'clock P.M., and the other at sunset. **In the midst of the sea.** About twenty-five or thirty furlongs, or three and a half miles from the shore (John 6: 19), about the middle of the lake. When Jesus had dismissed the people, and ascended the mountain, the ship was already a prey to the wind and waves, and driven, contrary to the will of the disciples, into the middle of the sea. During three watches, or till about three o'clock in the morning, the disciples had vainly endeavored to bring the ship back to the north-eastern coast, in order to meet the Master near Bethsaida. They were only driven farther westward; and, when the Saviour finally came into the ship, they were already quite close to the western shore. — *Lange*.

48. He saw them toiling. Better, tormented or distressed. Here applied not merely to the labor or exertion, but to the distress and pain by which it was accompanied, both bodily and mental. — *Alexander*. **In rowing.** Putting forth all their strength to buffet the waves and bear on against a head-wind, but to little effect. There had arisen one of those sudden and violent squalls to which all inland waters, surrounded by lofty hills intersected with gullies, are liable. Many travellers bear witness to the fact that such storms beat with peculiar force upon the Sea of Galilee. — *Schaff*. He saw this from his mountain-top, and through the darkness of the night, for his heart was all with them; yet would he not go to their relief till his own time came. — *J. F. and B.* Alone or in company, in sickness or in health, by sea or by land, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, the same eye which saw the disciples tossed on the lake is ever looking at us. We are never beyond the reach of his care. Our way is never hid from him. He knows the path that we take, and is still able to help. He may not come to our aid at the time we like best, but he will never allow us utterly to fail. Jesus sees us, and will not forsake us. — *Ryle*. **The wind was contrary;** i.e., from the north or north-east. From any point on the eastern shore the disciples would require to steer northward in order to reach Bethsaida-Julias. A strong north-easterly wind had driven them in an opposite direction, and far into the sea. — *Lange*. **The fourth watch.** The Jews, who used to divide the night into three watches, latterly adopted the Roman division into four watches, as here: so that, at the rate of three hours to each, the fourth watch, reckoning from six P.M., would be three o'clock in the morning. The lake is about seven miles broad at its widest part. So that in eight or nine hours they had only made some three and a half miles (John 6: 19). By this time, therefore, they

49. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out :

50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer : it is I ; be not afraid.

but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was an apparition, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled. But he straightway spake with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I;

must have been in a state of exhaustion and despondency bordering on despair. — *J. F. and B.* — It ought to have comforted them, to remember that he himself had *constrained* them to enter into the ship. They were evidently in the path of duty. How, then, could any evil befall them? It is a great comfort to *us* when we can feel sure that we are doing the will of God; for, whatever trouble may threaten us, we can trust Jesus to bring relief in the storm. — *Stephen H. Tyng, D.D. Cometh unto them.* So soon as they had made proof that without him they could do nothing, he was with them once more. For it had been his purpose in all this, as Chrysostom well brings out, to discipline and lead them up to ever higher things than they had learned before. In the first storm he was present in the ship with them; and thus they must have felt all along that if it came to the worst they might rouse him, and the very consciousness of his presence must have given them the sense of comparative security. But he will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of his bodily presence, — as ivy, needing always an outward support, — but as hardy forest-trees which can brave a blast; and this time he puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them. And by the issue he will awaken in them a confidence in his ever-ready help; for, as his walking over the sea must have been altogether unimagined by them, they may have easily despaired of that help reaching them, and yet it does not fail them. When he has tried them to the uttermost, “*in the fourth watch of the night*,” he appears beside them, thus teaching them, for all their after-life, in all coming storms of temptation, that he is near them; that, however he may not be seen always by their bodily eyes, however they may seem cut off from his assistance, yet is he indeed a very present help in the needful time of trouble.

Nor can we, I think, fail to recognize the symbolic character which this whole transaction wears. As that bark was upon those stormy seas, such is oftentimes the Church. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make; so baffled is it and tormented by the opposing storms of the world. But his eye is on it still; he is in the mountain apart praying; ever living, an ascended Saviour, to make intercession for his people. And when at length the time of urgent need has arrived, he is suddenly with it, and that in marvellous ways past finding out; and then all that before was laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be. — *Trench. Walking upon the sea.* The words “walking on the sea” are common to the three Evangelists, and can have no other meaning here than that the Lord *walked bodily on the surface of the water.* — *Alford.* We may see in it something like an anticipation (not unconnected, it may be, with the intensity of that crisis in his life) of that spiritual body of which we see another manifestation in the transfiguration, and which became normal after the resurrection, reaching its completeness in the wonder of the ascension. — *Ellicott.* **Would have passed by them.** Only in the sense of Luke 24:28. Gen. 18:3; 32:26. This “would have passed by,” and the “willingly received him,” of John 6:21, mutually explain one another. — *Lange.* He will seem to pass them by, seem to forsake them; and so evoke their prayer and their cry that he would *not* pass them by, that he would *not* forsake them. It is evermore thus: we have here no exceptional dealing, but one finding its analogies everywhere in the Scripture and in the Christian life. — *Trench.*

49. **When they saw him walking upon the sea.** *Walking upon the sea* was thought so impracticable that the picture of two feet walking on the sea was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossible thing. — *Philip Doddridge.* **It had been a spirit.** An apparition, an unreal appearance of a real person. The word is not that usually rendered “spirit.” — *Schaff.* He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters, then as a human figure; but in the dark tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord, they take it for a spirit. (Cf. Luke 24:37.) — *J. F. and B.* **Cried out.** In fright. The vivid sketch of their sudden terror may be regarded as an indirect evidence of the faithfulness of the narrative. They seem to have regarded the apparition as an indication of coming evil. — *Lange.*

50. **Be of good cheer.** Be cheerful, not disturbed or afraid. This is the gospel message of *peace*, on the ground, — the simple ground, — “It is I.” Christ’s presence is peace to the soul. — *Jacobus.* How often has he to speak this word of encouragement, even to his own! almost always when they are brought suddenly, or in an unusual way,

51. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52. For ¹ they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their ² heart was hardened.

53. ³ And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

55. And ran through the whole region round about,

be not afraid. And he went ⁵¹ up unto them into the boat; and the wind ceased; and they were sore amazed in themselves; for they under- ⁵² stood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

And when they had crossed ⁵³ over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. And when they ⁵⁴ were come out of the boat, straightway *the people* knew him, and ran round about ⁵⁵ that whole region, and began

¹ Mark 8:17, 18. ² Mark 3:5; 16:14. ³ Matt. 18:34.

face to face with him (see Gen. 15:1; 21:17. Judg. 6:23. Matt. 28:5. Luke 2:10). — *Trench*. Mark omits the account given by Matthew (14:28-30) of Peter's asking to walk on the sea, and his failure when he looked at the storm instead of Jesus. To hear the familiar tones and the cheering words, was enough, even amid the howling of the winds and the dashing of the waves, to give them confidence and hope. We can scarcely doubt that in after-years that moment came back to their recollection, invested for them, as it has since been for the Church at large, with something of a symbolic character. Often the sky became dark, and the waves of a troublesome world were rough, and the blasts of persecution beat on them, and the ark of Christ's Church was tossed on the waters, and they were wearied and spent with rowing. They thought themselves abandoned; and then, in the dim twilight, they would see or feel once again the tokens of his presence. He was coming to them through the storm. "Be of good cheer," became the watchword of their lives. — *Ellicott*. It is I. Literally, *I am*. The same language used by Jesus in Jerusalem (John 8:58), for which the Pharisees would have stoned him, and in the Old Testament to designate Jehovah (Exod. 3:14). Here I should prefer to give it this meaning: Christ says not merely, "It is I, your Friend and Master:" he says, at least implies, it is the "I AM," who is coming to you, the Almighty One who rules wind and waves, who made them, and whom they obey. — *Abbott*.

51. He went up . . . into the ship. John says "they willingly received him;" and, on account of the wind abating, they came at once to port. Christ's getting in the ship was their salvation. He can both calm the tempest round us, and carry us safe to heaven. — *Jacobus*. The wind ceased. John (6:21) speaks of the boat being immediately "at the land whither they went." This was on the western side of the lake; and we may either suppose that the wind during the night had driven them near that shore, or accept another miracle. — *Schaff*. Sore amazed . . . beyond measure. Observe the strong expressions here employed. Not only were they "sore amazed," but "beyond measure." Never had the disciples been so impressed by the majesty of Christ as they were now in consequence of this miracle. St. Matthew (14:33) tells us that the impression made extended also to those who were with them in the ship, i.e., probably the crew. Not only did they approach him with an outward unforbidden gesture of worship, "but they avowed for the first time collectively, what one of them had long since separately declared him to be, *the Son of God*" (Matt. 14:33; compare John 1:49). — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

52. Considered not the miracle of the loaves. Or, they understood not: their minds had not been opened by the miracle of the loaves. — *Cook*. There was no intelligent comprehension founded on the miracle of the loaves. They did not, from the miracle they had seen, infer the power of the Lord over nature. — *Alford*. For their heart (i.e., their mind) was hardened. The reference is to "sluggishness and obtuseness of intellect," not to callous feeling or insensible affection. — *Alexander*. Yet there is a tone of censure in the verse. This state of mind was in keeping with their character, as portrayed throughout the Gospels, and true to human nature. — *Schaff*.

53. The land of Gennesaret. A small district four miles long and two or three wide, on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, to which it gave one of its names. (Capernaum was situated in this district.) Josephus describes it as the garden of the whole land, and possessing a fertility and loveliness almost unparalleled. — *Alexander*. Drew to the shore. Came to anchor near it.

III. Healing the Sick. — Vers. 54-56. 54. They knew him. The people of the locality immediately identified him. This might be the case, even though they had never seen him before. — *Morison*.

55. Ran through that whole region. Informing the people of the arrival of the wonderful Healer. Those that were sick. The people of the district, when informed of

and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched¹ him were made whole.

to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

¹ Matt. 9:20. Mark 5:27, 28. Acts 19:12.

the arrival of the great Healer, began immediately to trace his steps, carrying with them from place to place, in their pursuit, the invalids whom they wished him to heal. — *Morison*.

56. **Whithersoever he entered.** In and around Gennesaret. This implies that a journey of some kind followed. **Or country;** literally, fields. Where cultivation was going on, and where, consequently, people were to be found in numbers. **Streets.** Better, market-places. The market-places of the East were sometimes inside the towns, and sometimes outside. But they were always the chief places of resort. — *Morison*. **But the border of his garment.** The numbers that pressed upon him seemed almost too large for him to be able to heal them singly by laying his hands upon them, therefore many begged that they might be allowed to touch *if it were but the border of his garment*. Soon after followed the ever-memorable discourse, so strikingly in accordance with the present pass-over season in the synagogue of Capernaum, respecting "the Bread of Life" (John 6:22-65). *Maclear*. The thoughts which are here prominent are the separation of the disciples from their Lord, their difficulties amid the darkness and the storm, their fear as they dimly see Jesus approaching, the words which remove their fear, their "will" to receive, the immediate end of all their trouble and danger. The cardinal thought is their safety when they have received Jesus. The narrative is connected with that which precedes, in that, here as there, all attention is concentrated on the Redeemer himself, who in sovereign power and in infinite grace, manifests his glory. — *Schaff*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

The Tract: "It is I, be not afraid." Spurgeon's *Sermons*, 9:476. Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures, on Conscience: "The Physical Tangibleness of the Moral Law."*

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. We often learn more of faith in one month of darkness and storm, than in years of sunshine. When God would prepare us for higher work, for sweeter peace, for clearer light, he brings them by an increase of faith, and increases our faith by trying our faith. In the early dawn of Britain, Cuthbert left his sheep, and went to preaching Christ. One day with three companions on the sea, he was tossed by a storm upon a dreary shore, and his comrades cried to him, —

"Cuthbert, let us perish, — hope is o'er;
The furious tempest shuts the water path;
The snow-storm binds us on the bitter land."

"Now, wherefore, friends, have ye so little faith?" God's servant said, and, stretching forth his hand toward heaven, —

"He lifted up his reverent eyes, and spake, —
'I thank thee, Lord, the way is open there.
No storm above our heads in wrath shall break,
And shut the heavenward path of love and prayer.'"

The heavenward path of love and prayer is never shut to faith by earthly storms. It is opened by them. — *P*.

II. **Christ watching them in the storm.** Ver. 48. In Cole's famous series of pictures, *The Voyage of Life*, there is a guardian spirit watching over the voyager, close at hand in *childhood*; but in *manhood* he is above, among the clouds, and behind the voyager, who is struggling in the rough waters, and whose vision of the future is hidden by the storm. But he ever "guides him with his eye." — *P*.

III. Ver. 48. Some ladies once went to a silversmith to get light from his trade, on Mal. 3:3, — "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." After describing the process, he said that the refiner must *sit with his eye upon the melted silver*, lest the fire be too hot, for the least over-degree of heat would injure it; and he knew when the silver was refined

by seeing his own image reflected from its surface. So God keeps his eye upon us in trouble. He watches us all the way through the storm. And when he sees that the trials have done their work, and we are formed into his likeness, the fire is removed, the storm ceases. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 45-47. Jesus sometimes leaves us alone, that we may know ourselves and our own weakness, but he never leaves us out of sight. — *Quesnell.*
2. Christ designs hereby to manifest himself with the more wonderful grace. — *Henry.*
3. Vers. 48, 49. There are often "contrary winds," even in the way of duty. We must expect them, and not be discouraged, nor turn out of the way.
4. Christ never forgets to seek communion alone with God.
5. Christ always watches over us in trouble and dangers, even when we seem most alone.
6. When we cannot come to Christ, he is sure to come to us.
7. Christ always comes to those who are toiling to come to him. — *Abbott.*
8. Even the appearances and approaches of deliverance are sometimes occasions of trouble and perplexity.
9. Jesus waits for us to call him in the hour of trouble
10. Vers. 50, 51. Jesus is the Lord of nature.
11. Christ is our light in darkness, our peace in storms. — *Abbott.*
12. Christ brings good cheer wherever he comes, for he is the *I AM*, able and willing to save to the uttermost.
13. Ver. 52. By the memory of past mercies, we gain faith in present needs.
14. Ver. 56. All who touch Christ are healed.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Here we are brought face to face with two great facts of life, — **CONTRARY WINDS, EVEN IN THE WAY OF DUTY, AND CHRIST WATCHING OVER US IN THE STORM.** (1) *The disciples alone; the winds contrary*, vers. 45-48. Here all the circumstances of the journey may be set forth, illustrating the hinderances we often meet, the contrary winds of hate, temptation, opposition, poverty, persecution. (2) *Christ watching over them*, vers. 48, 49. They never get beyond his watchful eye. (3) *The deliverance*, vers. 50-52. The cheer and power to help, Jesus always brings with him. We are near the end when he comes to help. (4) *Christ a help in many troubles*, vers. 53-56. Healing the sick, and all who but touch him.

LESSON V. — APRIL 30.

THE TRADITION OF MEN. — MARK 7: 1-23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* — MARK 7: 7.

TIME. — May or June of A. D. 29; soon after the last lesson. The third passover since the beginning of Christ's ministry had taken place a short time before; but he did not go up to Jerusalem, because he knew the Jews sought to kill him, and his time was not come.

PLACE. — *Capernaum*, where very recently Jesus had preached that wonderful discourse contained in John (chap. 6) on the bread of life, and which was the occasion of many of his followers forsaking him, and which substantially brought to an end his public ministry in Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT. — This lesson is recorded only by Mark and Matthew (15: 1-20).

INTRODUCTION.

Chap. 7 begins the story of the last year of our Lord's ministry. The history of "the year of conflict" begins with an account of a covert attack on our Lord. The Pharisees from Jerusalem began their open opposition some time before (Mark 3: 22). Then they expressed a blasphemously hostile opinion respecting the miracles of our Lord: now they remonstrate against the conduct of his disciples. The opposition now, though apparently less bitter, was really more dangerous. — *Schaff.* The verses sum up the great controversy of the New Testament, — that between the religion of the letter and external observances, and the religion of the heart. — *Cambridge Bible.*

1. Then ¹ came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

And there are gathered to-
gether unto him the Pharisees,
and certain of the scribes,
which had come from Jeru-
salem, and had seen that ²
some of his disciples ate their
bread with defiled, that is, un-
washen, hands. For the Phari-
sees, and all the Jews, except
they wash their hands diligent-
ly, eat not, holding the tradi-
tion of the elders: and *when* ⁴

¹ Matt. 15: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Traditions — the Washing of Hands. — Vers. 1-8. **1. Then came together unto him.** *Against* him, as we see. — *Schaff*. The ruling Jewish authorities at Jerusalem had definitely concluded to take advantage of his expected visit to the city at the passover, to accomplish his destruction (John 7: 1): Jesus, therefore, did not go to the passover. Failing in reaching him there, they went to him to accomplish their purpose. **Pharisees and certain of the scribes.** Representatives of the party of the Pharisees, including scribes. **Came from Jerusalem.** Either delegated formally by the sanhedrim, or at the instance of some of the high officials, or it might be only of some of the officious. — *Morison*. They came apparently with a definite and hostile purpose, probably to aid the Galilean Pharisees. — *Schaff*. The presence of this new deputation may be ascribed to the reports that had been borne to that city by the pilgrims going to the feast, of the feeding of the 5,000, and of the wish of the people to make him king. So great a miracle, and its effect on the popular mind, could not be overlooked; and they hasten to counteract, if possible, his growing influence. — *Andrews*.

2. When they saw; i.e., on some very recent occasion. **Some of his disciples.** Not necessarily here any of the twelve, but probably that is the meaning. **Eat bread.** This incident naturally brings to view the constant and intrusive surveillance to which our Lord and his disciples were subjected. — *Alexander*. **With defiled . . . hands.** (In the margin, *common* instead of *defiled*.) This expression is derived from the ceremonial law, by which the Jews were separated from the other nations, and their sacred rites and utensils from all things, even of the same kind, which had not been thus sanctified or set apart to sacred uses, as distinguished from all secular and common uses. — *Alexander*. **With unwashen hands.** Not with dirty hands, but with hands which had not been subjected to the ceremonial process described below. — *Abbott*. **They found fault.** The divine spirit his disciples breathed, their high-toned conversation, the holy principles on which their character was organized, the honesty and honor, the rectitude and religion, that rang in their utterances and shone in their lives, went for nothing in the estimation of these hollow-hearted traditionists. The clean heart was nothing to them: the clean hand was all they thought of. Thus it has ever been with their class, — the letter is exalted above the spirit; punctilios above principles. — *Thomas*.

3. Except they wash their hands oft (or diligently), eat not. It is, literally, *with the fist*, and that appears to me to be the better rendering. It is, then, a reference to the



WASHING HANDS.

4. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5. ¹ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written,

they come from the market-place, except they wash themselves, they eat not: and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels. And ⁵ the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said unto them, Well ⁶ did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

¹ Matt. 15:2.

rabbinical rules, which are said to have required the rubbing of the open palm with the closed fist. — *Abbott*. (See New Version.) The Pharisees washed so often, to prove how pure they were, and how carefully they obeyed God's law. — *P*. The tradition. What had been handed down; not what was delivered *by writing* in the law of Moses, but what had been communicated from father to son as being proper and binding. Of the elders. The elders, or presbyters, were the Jewish teachers, or scribes, such as Hillel and Shammai. Many of the traditions were frivolous, some actually subversive of God's law (see under vers. 6, 7). — *Cambridge Bible*. The Jews attached more importance to the traditionary exposition than to the Scripture text itself. — *Alford*. They compared the written word to water; the traditionary exposition, to the wine which must be mingled with it. The duty of washing before meat is not inculcated in the law, but only in the traditions of the scribes. So rigidly did the Jews observe it, that Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst to eating without washing his hands. — *Alford*.

4. **From the market.** The *market*, or market-place, in the ancient Jewish towns and villages, would correspond to the modern bazaar of the East. It was the place of concourse, and hence the place of merchandise. — *Morison*. **Except they wash, they eat not.** They might have come, in the crowd of the market, into passing contact with a Gentile, and his touch was as defiling as if it had been that of a corpse. **Many other things, . . . received to hold.** As authoritative ordinances traditionally handed down. — *Morison*. **Washing of cups.** Drinking-vessels. **Pots.** The word here used is derived from the Latin, meaning a vessel holding the sixth part of a larger one. It was probably wooden, holding about a pint and a half. **Brazen vessels.** Earthen ones were broken when defiled (Lev. 15:12). **Tables** (omitted in New Version). Couches, not tables, is the meaning of the word. The couches on which persons then reclined at meals. — *Schaff*. These also had to be scrupulously washed, because it was possible that a heathen might have lain on them. — *Ellicott*. The law of Moses required purifications in certain cases (Lev. 12:15); but the rabbis had perverted the spirit of Leviticus in this as in other things, for they taught that food and drink could not be taken with a good conscience when there was the possibility of ceremonial defilement. If every conceivable precaution had not been taken, the person or the vessel used might have contracted impurity, which would thus be conveyed to the food, and through the food to the body, and by it to the soul. Hence it had been long a custom, and latterly a strict law, that before every meal not only the hands, but even the dishes, couches, and tables, should be scrupulously washed. — *Geikie*.

5. **Why walk not thy disciples?** The common question of ecclesiasticism in all ages, which makes the traditions of the Church, not the law of God, the standard of life. — *Abbott*. The word "walk" has a technical significance. Why do they not observe the *halacha* (literally, walking); i. e., the teaching of the rabbis, which regulates the details of daily life. — *Cook*. How comes it, asked they, that a teacher who claims a higher sanctity than others can quietly permit his disciples to neglect a custom imposed by our wise forefathers, and so carefully observed by every pious Israelite? — *Geikie*. Their wonder was, that Jesus had not inculcated this observance on his followers, and not, as some have fancied, that he had enjoined them to neglect what had been their previous practice. — *Kitto*.

6. **He answered.** As usual, our Lord at once made common cause with his disciples, and did not leave them, in their simplicity and ignorance, to be overawed by the attack of these stately and sanctimonious critics. — *Farrar*. **Well hath.** The Saviour means that the words of Isaiah could not have been more apt and felicitous, if he had had really present before him, for the purpose of taking their portrait, those very Pharisees and scribes who were finding fault with the disciples. — *Morison*. **Esaias** (Greek for Isaiah) prophesied. (Isa. 29:13.) Spoke the truth from God. The Saviour, as Calvin has judiciously remarked,

¹ This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

This people honoureth me
with their lips,
But their heart is far from
me.
But in vain do they wor-
ship me,
Teaching *as their* doc-
trines the precepts of
men.

Ye leave the commandment 8
of God, and hold fast the tra-
dition of men. And he said 9
unto them, Full well do ye
reject the commandment of
God, that ye may keep your

¹ Isa. 29:13. Matt. 15:8.

does not mean that Isaiah was looking forward to the scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament age. He means, that the prophet's utterances depicted these scribes and Pharisees to perfection. — *Morison*. These words are quoted from the Septuagint, a Greek translation used by the Jews in Christ's time, and hence the slight variations from our Bible. **This people honoureth me with their lips.** By using the words of obedience and worship. When the prophet refers to *the lips*, he specifies a part for the whole. Jesus had in his eye the baptism of cups and the washing of hands, as well as the saying of prayers and the utterances of solemn tones. — *Morison*. **Their heart is far from me.** By *heart* is meant love to God, and the choice to obey him. The bended knee, the bowed head, the loud amen, the daily chapter, the regular attendance at the Lord's table, are all useless and unprofitable, so long as our affections are nailed to sin, or pleasure, or money, or the world. — *Ryle*.

7. **In vain do they worship me.** That is, their attempts to worship are *vain*, or are not real worship: they are mere *forms*. — *Barnes*. **Teaching for doctrines, etc.** Not *for*, i.e., in lieu of doctrines, but teaching doctrines which are of human origin. — *Abbott*. The word *doctrines*, here, means the requirements of religion, — things to be believed and practised in religion. God only has a right to declare what shall be done in his service; but they held their traditions to be superior to the written word of God, and taught them as *doctrines* binding the conscience. — *Barnes*. Wherever Scripture and tradition seemed opposed, the latter was treated as the higher authority. Pharisaism openly proclaimed this, and set itself, as the Gospel expresses it, in the chair of Moses, displacing the great Lawgiver. — *Geikie*.

8. **Laying aside.** Literally, "having cast away." **Ye hold the tradition of men.** Literally, *the things given by men*. That is, a tradition of men which is handed down from father to son, is traceable only to a human author, yet is cited by the ecclesiastic as an authority, as though it came from God. — *Abbott*. This the rigid ceremonialist generally does. — *Abbott*. Let us beware of attempting to add anything to the word of God, as necessary to salvation. It is just as easy to destroy the authority of God's word by addition as by subtraction. — *Ryle*. **Many other such like things.** He had but given a specimen of the hideous treatment which the divine law received, and the grasping disposition which, under the mask of piety, was manifested by the ecclesiastics of that day. — *J. F. and B.* There is no objection to obeying the commandment of man in its own place: it is only when that commandment is made an essential thing, though it have not its foundation in Scripture, or when it is raised to supremacy over God's word, that it ought to be resisted, repudiated, and rejected. In things indifferent (you may) do any thing that will please the most; in matters ecclesiastical (you may) submit to much you dislike if only it will secure peace; but in matters of essential moment, involving the glory of God, the safety of the soul, the ascendancy of vital truth, you may concede the largest husk of prejudice, but you must not give up the least living seed of eternal truth. — *Cumming*. But be sure and never compel others to do these unessential things, or regard them as less religious because they disregard them. — *P.*

II. **Traditions—Honoring Parents.** — Vers. 9-13. 9. **Full well.** Fittingly; in exact accordance with the rest of your character. The language is that of bitter sarcasm. **Ye reject.** The word "reject" conveys the idea of "rescinding," or "repealing." This the Pharisees practically did when they added traditions which pretended to be interpretations, but were in reality at variance with the commandment. — *Ellicott*. **Keep your own tradition.** Literally, *keep close watch over*. Compare Matt. 23:16-19, and Col. 2:18-23, and observe here, (1) Christ rebukes the employment, *as an authority in religion*, of systems of doctrine, ethics, ritual, which are of human origin; (2) the folly of all religion

10. For Moses said, ¹ Honor thy father and thy mother; and, ² Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* ³ Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13. Making the word of God of none effect through

tradition. For Moses said, ¹⁰ Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ¹¹ ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him ¹² to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the ¹³ the word of God by your tradi-

¹ Exod. 20: 12. Deut. 5: 16. Matt. 23: 4. ² Exod. 21: 17. Lev. 20: 9. Prov. 20: 20. ³ Matt. 15: 5; 23: 18.

founded on such human authority; (3) the effect of it, the displacement of the divine laws which concern the heart-life, by human rules, which require only external conduct. — *Abbott*. At the bottom of all rigorous enforcement of traditional observances, there is an unconscious, or half-conscious, repugnance to submit perfectly to the law of God. — *Lange*. Not only in this one case did they thus reject and multiply God's precept, but in others of far more importance, because relating not to rites, but moral duties; not to the abuse of positive and temporary institutions, but to the neglect of the most tender natural relations. Of this he gives a single instance, but a most affecting one, which utters volumes as to the spirit and tendency of Pharisaic superstition. — *Alexander*.

10. For Moses said. A remarkable testimony from our Lord to the divine origin of the Mosaic law; not merely of the Decalogue as such, for the second commandment quoted is not in the Decalogue. — *Alford*. Moses received his laws from God, and hence this law was also God's law. Honor thy father and mother (Exod. 20: 12. Deut. 5: 16). This implies not only an abstract sentiment, a cordial inward respect and esteem for their persons, but also obedience to their lawful commands, submission to their rebukes, instructions, and corrections, deference to their counsels, and sincere endeavors to promote their comfort. — *Bush*. Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death; i.e., let him be put to death; literally, *let him end in death*. The quotation is from Exod. 21: 17. Lev. 20: 9. Such conduct subjected the offender to capital punishment, because it implied the utmost degree of depravity. He who could break the bonds of filial reverence and duty to such a degree as in word or action to abuse his own parents, clearly evinced thereby that he was lost to all goodness, and abandoned to all wickedness.

11. But ye say. God said one thing, ye say another. The quotation which follows is from the rabbinical rules. If a man shall say. Literally it runs, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That from which thou mightest have been benefited by me is Corban, *that is to say, a gift or offering consecrated to God, he shall be free, and ye suffer him no longer to do ought for his father or his mother.* — *Cambridge Bible*. It is Corban. The Hebrew word means *a gift (to God), — a sacrificial gift*. It was literally applied to that which had been consecrated, — theoretically to God, practically to the service or ornamentation of the temple. — *Ellicott*. The Pharisees did not openly deny the obligation of the fifth commandment. In all probability they professed to attach as much importance to it as any men. And yet they contrived to make it void! How did they effect this? They taught that a man might dedicate to God's service, as sacred, any part of his property which might be applied to the relief of his parents, and so discharge himself from any further expense about them. He had only to say that all his money was "Corban," — that is, given over to holy purposes, — and no further claim could be made upon him for his father's or mother's support. Under pretence of giving God a prior claim, he set himself free from the burden of maintaining them forever. The casuistry of the scribes in this matter seems at first so monstrous that it would be hard to understand how it could have approved itself to any intelligent interpreters of the law, were it not that the teaching of scholastic and Jesuit moralists presents instances, not less striking, of perverted ingenuity. The time of fulfilling the vow of consecration was left to his own discretion. He might defer the fulfilment of his vow to the last hour of life, and no one had a right to call him to account for delay. With this loop-hole the Corban practice became an easy method of evading natural obligations. — *Ellicott*. So far was this doctrine carried, that the contemptuous or angry use of the language of a vow was held to exempt the person making it from his obligations of assistance. — *Abbott*.

12. Ye suffer him no more to do ought. Not necessarily that they actively forbade it, but their teachings virtually permitted him to neglect his father and mother altogether. This is the comment of our Lord, not the language of the Pharisees. — *Schaff*.

13. Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions. The con-

your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14. ¶¹ And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of *you*, and understand:

15. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16. ² If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17. ³ And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19. Because it entereth not into his heart, but into

tion, which ye have delivered and many such like things ye do. And he called to him ¹⁴ the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: there ¹⁵ is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things ¹⁶ which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when he was entered into ¹⁷ the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable. And he saith unto ¹⁸ them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, ¹⁹ it cannot defile him: because ¹⁹ it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth

¹ Matt. 15: 10. ² Matt. 11: 15 ³ Matt. 15: 15.

ference began by an accusation of illegal teaching, brought by the scribes against Christ: it ends with an accusation of illegal teaching, brought by Christ against the scribes. — *Abbott*.

III. **Explanations.** — Vers. 14-23. 14. When he had called all the people. The foregoing dialogue, though in the people's hearing, was between Jesus and the Pharisaic cavillers, whose object was to disparage him with the people. But Jesus, having put them down, turns to the multitude, who at this time were prepared to drink in every thing he said, and with admirable plainness, strength, and brevity, lays down the great principle of real pollution. — *J. F. and B.* He turned from the disputes and traditions of the schools to the unperverted conscience of the common people. — *Ellicott*.

15. **Nothing from without a man.** Nothing that is and remains external to man, and enters only into his body, not into his heart to become a part of his character, can defile. The Pharisees feared defilement from their food: it is of this defilement our Lord speaks. But underlying this is the deeper truth, that nothing which is external to character can defile the soul, so long as it remains external, does not become incorporated in the character. Evidently this verse is only a brief epitome of a considerable discourse. — *Abbott*. **Can defile him.** Make him common, impure, or profane. The Mosaic law, by a variety of regulations, kept up the distinction between pure and impure, to teach the importance of *moral* purity. This purpose had been lost sight of, and the external regulation not only made the main matter, but extended and exalted, so that ceremonial impurity was considered worse than moral impurity. Our Lord opposes only this perversion of the Mosaic law. Pharisees, in all ages, have exalted the mere sign and symbol above the reality. Some people make their whole religion consist in not allowing certain meats and drinks to enter into the mouth. — *Schaff*. **The things which come out of him.** His words; the expression of his thoughts and feelings; his conduct, as the expression of inward malice, anger, covetousness, lust, etc. **Defile the man.** Is really polluted or offensive in the sight of God. They render the soul corrupt and abominable in the sight of God. — *Barnes*.

16. **If any man have ears to hear;** i.e., the faculty of hearing given to him for the very purpose. Let him hear. Let him use it upon this occasion, when, if ever, he will find it advantageous so to do. — *Alexander*.

17. **His disciples.** From Matthew we learn that the questioner was St. Peter (Matt. 15: 15). **Asked him concerning the parable.** They regarded the words uttered in the hearing of the mixed multitude, and which deeply offended the Pharisees (Matt. 15: 12), as a parable, or "dark saying." — *J. F. and B.*

18. **So without understanding.** Without spiritual appreciation of the truth. — *Abbott*. The tendency to regard the external and formal as a vital and leading characteristic of religion was well-nigh unconquerable, in minds habituated to Jewish conceptions. — *Geikie*. **Do ye not perceive.** The truth affirmed was one easy to be perceived by the spiritually minded. — *Schaff*.

19. **Because it entereth not into his heart.** The reason of this impossibility is

the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21. ¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

out into the draught? *This he said*, making all meats clean. And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.

¹ Matt. 15: 19. Gen. 6: 5; 8: 21.

obvious; to wit, that food does not affect the mind or soul, but only the corporeal organs. — *Alexander*. Into the draught; i.e., the drain, sink, or privy. — *Schaff*. Purging all meats. Making all meats (or food) clean. Whatever food the body needs, it assimilates; and whatever it needs is not unclean nor defiling. Whatever it does not need, it, by a natural process, rejects from the system. Thus, nature provides for its own purification, and the laws of health are the only laws of cleanness and uncleanness which the Christian need recognize. In this declaration is the germ of the doctrine which Paul subsequently expounded more fully (Rom. 14: 2, 3, 14. 1 Cor. 8). — *Abbott*.

21. Out of the heart. The soul—the whole inner man—the character. The Saviour lays his hand on the fundamental spring of all that moral impurity which is so common in the world. It originates in the heart of man's being, and thence wells out. It is not an import, but an export. Nothing but what is the product of free-will can be sinful, or have guilt attaching to it. — *Morison*. Evil thoughts. Reasonings, purposes, not mere notions. The criminality of acts proceed from the purpose; for these acts man is responsible. The plural number indicates that these sins are common and notorious. — *Schaff*. Thirteen forms of evil are here noticed as proceeding from the heart. The first seven, in the plural number, are predominant actions; the latter six, in the singular, dispositions. — *Cambridge Bible*.

22. Covetousness; literally, covetousnesses or covetings. Grasping, greedy desires. Wickedness; literally, wickednesses. Malignities, evil dispositions. Deceit. Fraud, as distinguished from actual theft. Lasciviousness. Sensual excess. Evil eye. A figure for envy. Blasphemy. Proud and spiteful anger, manifesting itself in abusive language against God. Pride. Self-exaltation, leading to arrogance towards God and man. Foolishness. Senselessness, unreasoning folly in thoughts as well as in the words and acts which result. A fearful catalogue, true to nature still. How well our Lord, the purest of the pure, knew the depths of iniquity from which he would save sinful men! — *Schaff*.

23. All these things . . . defile the man. Let us never forget that the way to eradicate sin is to begin at the centre. It is the heart alone that is wrong. God alone can change it; but he waits ready to do so as soon as he is fervently, honestly, and from the heart, entreated to do it. — *Cumming*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Genius of the Gospel, 269-281. Some of the "Traditions of the Elders" are given in *Geikie* (vol. ii., 203-212); *Farrar*, ch. 31. For washing of the hands, *Land and Book*, 1: 183. C. G. Finney's *Important Subjects*, "Traditions of the Elders." *Sermon*, on ver. 13, by Rev. H. M. Dexter, D.D.: "The whole Bible, or none."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Traditions of the elders. The Talmud maintains that "any one living in the land of Israel, eating his daily food in purification, speaking the Hebrew of the day, and morning and evening praying duly with the phylacteries, is certain that he will eat bread in the kingdom of God."

"He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition," says Rabbi Eleazer, "has no share in the world to come."

Those who gave themselves to the knowledge of the traditions "saw a great light." It was perhaps good to give one's self to the reading of the Scripture; but he who reads diligently the traditions receives a reward from God, and he who gives himself to the commentaries on these traditions has the greatest reward of all. "The Bible was like water, the

traditions like wine, the commentaries on them like spiced wine." My son, says the Talmud, give more heed to the words of the rabbis than to the words of the law. — *Geikie's Life of Christ*.

II. The persecution of the Puritans, in the time of the Stuarts, on account of canons and rubrics, was, in too many cases, neither more nor less than zeal for traditions. An enormous amount of zeal was expended in enforcing conformity to the Church of England, while drunkenness, swearing, and open sin were comparatively let alone. — *Ryle*.

III. Haydon, the artist, wishing to make a picture of Christ entering into Jerusalem, had Landseer paint the ass on which Christ rode, but himself painted the Master. But the animal was done so much better that it drew the attention of all to the ass, and away from the Christ. So do we, when we exalt forms, ceremonies, creeds, traditions, above the religion of the heart and the written word of God. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. The wicked are ceaseless in their endeavors to destroy the good.
2. Ver. 2. The more we have of true religion, the more indifferent we are to mere forms and useless ceremonies.
3. Vers. 3-9. When much stress is laid upon ceremonies and traditions, it is almost certain that they will come to take the place of heart-religion and the word of God.
4. *Formalists*: "Those who wear the uniform but do not fight the battles of the Great King." — *Bowes*.
5. "Some may live upon forms; but there is no dying upon forms."
6. "Formalists, like Pharaoh's lean kine, are full-fed, yet lean."
7. Vers. 10-12. Nothing can remove from us the obligation to honor and care for our parents.
8. No religious act can take the place of our duties to our fellow-men. True religion makes us the more careful to keep every commandment. Here is a test of our religion.
9. Vers. 14, etc. A man's character is formed, not by what he receives, but by his use of what he receives. It is the sum of his acts and choices.
10. A man cannot reach a single stage of moral dignity apart from his own earnest endeavors. — *Genius of the Gospel*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION IS CONTRASTED in this lesson, condemning all resting in mere forms and ceremonies and traditions, and enforcing God's truth and the religion of the heart. (1) *The traditions of men are contrasted with the word of God* (vers. 1-9), showing their evil when they take the place of God's command. (2) *Christ gives an illustration of this* (vers. 10-13), by which we can enforce the duty of honoring parents, and show that all religion is vain which does not help us to fulfil our duties to men. (3) *External forms are contrasted with the religion of the heart* (vers. 14-23), showing what forms our characters, and what is our great need.

LESSON VI. — MAY 7.

SUFFERERS BROUGHT TO CHRIST. — MARK 7:24-37.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.* — *PSA.* 145:9.

TIME. — Summer, A. D. 29; following close after the last lesson.

PLACE. The first miracle was performed in the region of Tyre and Sidon, on the Mediterranean coast, forty or fifty miles north-west of the Sea of Galilee; the second, in the region of Decapolis, on the south-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (33d year); Herod Philip, of Iturea, including Caesarea Philippi.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT. — *Matt.* 15:21-31.

INTRODUCTION.

Soon after his discussion with the Pharisees (our last lesson), Jesus leaves Capernaum, and seeks retirement in the more heathen land of Syrophenicia, that he may rest, may avoid

24. ¶ ¹ And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it: But he could not be hid.

25. For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

And from thence he arose, ²⁴ and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it: and he could not be hid. But ²⁵ straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a ²⁶ Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

¹ Matt. 15:21.

his enemies, and still further instruct his disciples in the principles of the new kingdom. But even here he was sought out by those who needed him, as shown in our lesson for to-day.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Syrophenician Mother.—Vers. 24-30. **24. And from thence;** i. e., from the scenes of the last lesson in Galilee (chap. 6: 53), probably Capernaum. **Into the borders of Tyre and Sidon.** The original implies that he went not merely to, but within, the borders. Here we have the one recorded exception to that self-imposed law of his ministry which kept him within the limits of the land of Israel.—*Ellicott.* **Tyre and Sidon** were the two principal cities of Phenicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre was about twenty miles south of Sidon, and about one hundred miles in a straight line north-west of Jerusalem.—*Clark.* **And entered into an house.** This marks an entire change. In Palestine we always read of his addressing the people: here he enters a house, evidently because it was not then his intention to teach or to work miracles.—*Cook.* **And would have no man know it.** For they would disturb his rest and retirement, keep him from instructing his disciples, and make his retreat known to his enemies. **But he could not be hid.** His fame preceded him (chap. 3: 8); and his bearing and behavior marked him off as a remarkable personage. His "following" of disciples, moreover, would make concealment extremely difficult.—*Morison.* As the ointment bewrayeth itself, so he whose name is like ointment poured out "*could not be hid.*"—*Trench.*

25. For a certain woman. To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name than Herodias with one.—*Sir Thomas Brown.* **Heard of him.** She had heard of the mighty works which the Saviour of Israel had done; for already his fame had gone through all Syria (see Matt. 4: 24).—*Trench.* She sought the place where he dwelt, and seems to have applied in the first instance to the apostles to be admitted to their Master (Matt. 15: 23); and, on being repulsed by them, she concluded to await his coming forth.—*Kitto.* **Came.** Came into the house where Jesus was. **And fell at his feet.** An act denoting reverence and earnest entreaty. Her faith in his power is thus at once manifested. His concealment was the first means in its development. Faith led her to him.—*Clark.*

26. Was a Greek, a Syrophenician. Meaning by the first term to describe her religion, that it was not Jewish but heathen; by the second, the stock of which she came, which was even that accursed stock which God had once doomed to a total excision, but of which some branches had been spared by those first generations of Israel that should have extirpated them root and branch. Every thing, therefore, was against her; yet she was not hindered by that every thing from coming and craving the boon that her soul longed after.—*Trench.* The name "Greek" has come to be used by the Jews in the broad sense of *Gentile heathen.* She is called a woman of Canaan in Matt. 15: 22. The Phenicians were Canaanites, inhabiting a narrow strip of coast on the north-west of Palestine, but having a wide commerce and many colonies. This woman is called Syrophenician, either because she was of mixed race, Syrian and Phenician; or the Phenicians in this region may have been called Syrophenicians because they belonged to the Roman province of Syria, and were thus distinguished from the Phenicians who lived in Africa, the Carthaginians. (See *Schaff's Bible Dictionary.*) **And besought him.** She has a boon to ask for her daughter, or rather indeed for herself; for so entirely had she made her daughter's misery her own, that she comes saying, "*Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil*" (Matt. 15: 22).—*Trench.* She prays for one who could not pray for herself, and never rests till her prayer is granted.—*Ryle.* **Cast forth the devil.** The great majority of evangelical scholars agree in the opinion that the individuals described

27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she answered and saith unto him; Yea, Lord: even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

as possessed by evil spirits were really under their control, and that the cures described consisted, in fact as well as in appearance, in the casting-out of the evil spirits. — *Abbott*. (See Lessons III. and XI., First Quarter.)

27. But Jesus said unto her. St. Mark passes more briefly over the interview than St. Matthew. The latter Evangelist points out four stages of this woman's trial: (1) Silence: "*He answered her not a word*" (Matt. 15: 23). (2) The opposition of the disciples. (3) Refusal: "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matt. 15: 24). (4) Reproach: "*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs*" (Matt. 15: 26). *Maclear*. [Here is a seeming hesitancy, or refusal, but only seeming]; for Jesus knows with whom he has to do, and he has different ways for souls differently disposed. To the feeble he makes advances, and accommodates himself to their infirmities; the strong, it pleases him to make to wait, to provoke to holy combat. Thus he strengthened the faith of the woman of Canaan, while he instructed his disciples so much the more. — *Adolphe Monod*. Let the children first be filled. This language implies that there is food in the gospel for the Gentile as well as for the Jew, but that the gospel should begin with Israel. It is clear from this that Christ did not teach that the Gentiles were to be despised and outcast, and did not intend to be so understood in the words, as given in Matthew (15: 24), "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" — *Abbott*. To have spread out his ministry farther during the brief period of his terrestrial career, would simply have been to have thinned and weakened his influence. Whatever might have been gained extensively would have been lost intensively. He could not diffuse himself universally. He must select his sphere, and draw a circle. If all within that circle should welcome his ministry, they would soon be able to radiate out the influence to the ends of the earth. There was hope in the word "*first.*" — *Morison*. Our Lord's intention may be explained by the effect which his word produced. It elicited an expression of strong faith and deep humility, and showed the power of prayer. — *Cook*. Is not meet. Becoming, fitting. To take the children's bread. She knew that, in comparing the Jews to the children of God's family, and the heathen to the dogs without, he simply used the comparison and statement common among his people, as expressing the relation between them, without meaning to give personal offence. — *Kitt*. Cast it unto the dogs. In the original the diminutive is used, "*little dogs.*" The Jews were wont to designate the heathen as "*dogs,*" the noble characteristics of which animal are seldom brought out in Scripture. Here, however, the term is somewhat softened. The heathen are compared, not to the great wild dogs infesting Eastern towns, but to the small dogs attached to households. — *Maclear*. Thus she was hindered by the religious prejudices of her time. The presumption that the tone of his voice, and the manner of his utterance, gave to his words a different impression from that which they bear in the simple reading of them, is not unreasonable, in the light of the result to which they led. Her quick intuition read in his tone what the disciples failed to read in his words. Her ready repartee is the language of awakened hope, not the last despairing cry of a crushed and broken heart. He neither intended to repel her, nor, in fact, did so. — *Abbott*. When God is slow in giving, he only sets off his own gifts to advantage: he does not withhold them. Blessings long desired are sweeter when they come; if soon given, they lose much of their value. God reserves for thee that which he is slow to give thee, that you may learn to entertain a supreme desire and longing after it. — *Augustine*. "Light winning makes light the prize."

28. She answered and said. It was in vain to try to weary out a mother's love. With a woman's quickness, deepened by irrepressible trust in Him whose face and tones so contradicted his words, even this seeming harshness was turned to a resistless appeal. — *Geikie*. Not all the snows of her native Lebanon could quench the fire of love which was burning on the altar of her heart, and prompt as an echo came forth the glorious and immortal answer. — *Farrar*. Yes, Lord. Observe that she acquiesces heartily in Christ's declaration: it is not fit that the dogs be fed before the children. — *Abbott*. Yet the dogs eat of the children's crumbs. The word for *crumbs* is a diminutive, and means *little crumbs*. Her reference is not to considerable pieces intentionally thrown to the little dogs, but to small inconsiderable crumbs which children are so apt to let fall undesignedly on the ground. The children, she, as it were, reasons, cannot, as a general rule, use up absolutely all the bread that is given to them. As they break and crumble their portions, there is some super-

29. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31. ¶ ¹ And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the devil gone out. And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of De-

¹ Matt. 15: 29.

fluity—however little—that falls. And the little dogs get the benefit of it.—*Morison*. From the very word which seemed to make most against her, with the ready wit of faith, she drew an argument in her own favor. She takes the sword out of his own hand, with that sword to overcome him.—*Trench*. Her reply was the best absolutely that could be made. She did not dispute, she did not remonstrate, she did not even attempt to turn the edge of this thrust by renewed supplication. She acquiesced in it. She and hers were, she admitted it, unworthy; but there might be some hopes and blessings still for even her.—*Kitto*. Like her, thou must give God right in all he says against thee, and yet must not stand off from praying, till thou overcomest as she overcame, till thou hast turned the very charges made against thee into arguments and proofs of thy need,—till thou, too, hast taken Christ in his own words.—*Martin Luther*.

29. For this saying go thy way. Or, as Matthew has it, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, etc. (Matt. 15: 28). And now she has conquered. She who before heard only those words of a seeming contempt now hears words of a most gracious commendation,—words of which the like are recorded as spoken but to one other in all the gospel history (Matt. 8: 10): "*O woman, great is thy faith!*" Both of these cases of commendation were to Gentiles. He who at first seemed as though he would have denied her the smallest boon, now opens to her the full treasure-house of his grace, and bids her to help herself, to carry away what she will: "*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*" (Matt. 15: 28).—*Trench*. His very commendation I take to be a recognition of her spiritual appreciation of his love.—*Abbott*. The Christian may comfort himself under the hardest trials and severest struggles,—nay, even when his most ardent prayers appear to be unheard and unanswered,—with the consoling belief that behind the veil of harshness the Father's love conceals itself.—*Neander*. When she was come to her house. Her child, indeed, was at a distance; but she offered in her faith a channel of communication between it and Christ. With one hand of that faith she had held on to that Lord in whom all healing grace was stored, with the other to her suffering child,—thus herself a living conductor by which the power of Christ might run like an electric flash, from him to her beloved.—*Trench*. She found the devil gone out. Thus the daughter was healed in consequence of the mother's faith, and in answer to the mother's prayers.—*Maclear*. This woman gained great comfort in her misery by thinking great thoughts of Christ. She thought him one who kept so good a table that all she needed would only be a crumb in comparison. Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair; but great thoughts of Christ will pilot you into the haven of peace.—*Spurgeon*.

30. And her daughter laid on the bed. The Evangelist, with his usual liveliness of sympathy, follows the woman to her house, and realizes her feelings when she found her child prostrate, but quiet, on her couch, and thus knew at once that the evil thing had departed.—*Cook*. This Syrophenician woman is still, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the model supplicant. Her very coming to Jesus was an act of heroic faith; for she came not only without invitation or promise, but in the face of fearful discouragements. Somehow she believed beforehand in his love to her, a poor Gentile mother; and this was great faith indeed. And her faith grew stronger, and shone more brightly, through the progress of a trial which would have utterly extinguished that of any ordinary believer.—*Z. Eddy*.

II. The Deaf and Dumb Man cured.—Vers. 31-37. 31. And again departing. How long Jesus staid in these parts, is unknown. It would seem as if the incident just related had forced him to leave sooner than he had proposed, because it destroyed the possibility of retirement.—*Geikie*. He came unto the sea of Galilee. The direction of the journey appears to have been (1) northward toward Lebanon, then (2) from the foot of Lebanon through the deep gorge of the Leontes to the sources of the Jordan, and thence (3) along its eastern bank into the regions of Decapolis.—*Maclear*. Decapolis. The name given to a large and undefined region which lay around ten cities, to which peculiar

32. And ¹they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and ²he spit, and touched his tongue;

34. And ³looking up to heaven, ⁴he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35. ⁵And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

capolis. And they bring unto ³² him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. And he took him aside from ³³ the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and looking up to ³⁴ heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And his ears ³⁵ were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he

¹ Matt. 9: 32. Luke 11: 14. ² Mark 8: 23. John 9: 6. ³ Mark 6: 41. John 11: 41; 17: 1. ⁴ John 11: 33, 38. ⁵ Isa. 35: 5, 6. Matt. 11: 5.

privileges were granted by the Romans after their conquest of Syria. All of these, with a single exception, lay to the east and south-east of the Sea of Galilee. — *Hanna*.

32. And they bring unto him. We know not at which part of his journey, but probably somewhere when near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. — *Ellicott*. Even here his fame attracted great multitudes (Matt. 15: 30), having with them the lame, etc., and he healed them. Out of this multitude of cures St. Mark selects one to relate more in detail, no doubt because it was signalized by some circumstances not usual in other like cases of healing. — *Trench*. Was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. This shows that he had not been born deaf, or he would not have possessed even the imperfect use of speech. And they beseech him to put his hand upon him. In their eagerness they appear to have been somewhat too officious. Though usually doing as here suggested, he will deal with this case in his own way. — *J. F. and B.*

33. Aside from the multitude. Compare Mark 8: 23. Why? (1) Some think it was to avoid all show and ostentation; (2) others, to prevent a publicity which might bring together the Gentiles in crowds; (3) others, far more probably, that, apart from the interruptions of the crowd, the man might be more recipient of deep and lasting impressions. — *Maclear*. There must lie a deep meaning in all the variations which mark the different healings of different sick and afflicted, a wisdom of God ordering all the circumstances of each particular cure. Were we acquainted as accurately as he, with the spiritual condition of each who was brought within the circle of his grace, we should then understand why one was healed in the crowd, and another taken aside from the multitude; why for one a word effects a cure, for another a touch. — *Trench*. We see continual proof that the Lord is not tied to the use of any one means exclusively in conveying grace to the soul. Sometimes he is pleased to work by the word preached publicly, sometimes by the word read privately. Sometimes he awakens people by sickness and affliction, sometimes by the rebuke or counsel of friends. Sometimes he employs means of grace to turn people out of the way of sin, sometimes he arrests their attention by some providence. He will not have any means of grace made an idol, and exalted to the disparagement of other means. — *Ryle*. Put his fingers into his ears, . . . touched his tongue. These were without doubt symbolic actions intended to call out, in one not accessible to sound, the strongest faith in, and expectation of, the blessings about to be imparted. — *Kitto*. His infirmity prevented his receiving instruction in the ordinary way, and therefore actions took the place of words. — *Godwin*.

34. And looking up to heaven. Literally, into heaven. — *Alexander*. He sighed, as grieving over the wreck of the nature which he had made, occasioned by the malice of the Devil and the sin of man. — *Alford*. This expression of his sadness shows how perfectly Christ was man. Beholding only the displays of his miracle-working omnipotence, we might fix our attention only on his supernatural majesty, and so lose the tender sense of his human oneness with ourselves. — *F. D. Huntington*. As a man he sighed, but as God he wrought the cure. — *Bede*. It was after looking up to heaven that he groaned, for the deepest sympathy with man springs out of the loftiest communion with God. — *Morison*. Ephphatha. Mark preserves for us the very word which Christ spake, in the very language in which he uttered it. — *Trench*. (See Isa. 35: 5.) Ephphatha is a word belonging to that dialect of the old Hebrew language called the Aramaic, or Syro-Chaldaic, which was then current in Judea. — *Hanna*. Be opened. Mark himself translates it for his Gentile readers. It is because he proceeds instantly from sighing for the sick man to acting for him, that we know sympathy is not meant to waste itself in mere feeling, but to stimulate our active energies for useful service. — *F. D. Huntington*.

35. His ears were opened. Christ first opened his ears, then untied his tongue;

36. And ¹he charged them that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

spake plain. And he charged 36 them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were beyond meas- 37 ure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

¹ Mark 5: 43.

because we must hear well before we can speak well.—*Pontanus*. His tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. He whose tongue was loosed, and whose ears were opened, first made use of these recovered faculties in discoursing with Jesus; he whose eye was restored first employed his sight in gazing on Jesus. What an accession to the grace of each miracle! What a means of sanctifying the ear, the tongue, and the eye, and of training them to their proper office, the glory of God!—*J. Ford*.

36. And he charged them that they should tell no one. Publicity was enjoined when it would lead only to the pursuit of spiritual good.—*Godwin*. The fact of the cure could not, indeed, be concealed from the outside crowd. But our Saviour wished that it should not be blazoned abroad.—*Morison*. The probable reasons for these injunctions of secrecy were, his wish to avoid as much as possible the opposition of the Pharisees, which might have caused attempts upon his life before the purposes for which he came into the world were accomplished; and also to prevent any sedition or tumult among the people, arising from their mistaken notions of the Messiah as a temporal king and deliverer, by which means his enemies would have obtained the advantage they desired.—*Stanhope*. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. They probably did not understand the reason why he sought to restrain them, imagining, perhaps, that he was only giving expression to his modesty; and they felt so amazed and captivated that they could not hold their tongues.—*Morison*.

37. And were beyond measure astonished. Their excessive zeal was equalled by their excessive astonishment.—*Schaff*. He hath done all things well. Perhaps an allusion to Gen. 1: 31: the same power and beneficence were manifested in his healing as in God's work of creation.—*Alford*. This implies what Matthew states (15: 30, 31), that other works were then wrought, this being expressively significant and impressive. If the Syrophenician woman represented the Gentile Church, so this man may represent the Jewish Church, not hearing the word with the spiritual ear, and therefore not speaking clear and correct words of doctrine: when at his touch it recovers the inward sense, it speaks a right, sound, true doctrine.—*Cook*. The more we study the life of Christ, the more must we say, "He did all things well."—*F. Guizot*. When, wandering by the river of the water of life, we recall our past life, and, with far fresher memory than now, pass from scene to scene, remembering time's joys and sorrows, our calms and our storms, our weariness and our rest,—then shall we know that "He hath done all things well."—*Anon*. Deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. A literal fulfilment of Isa. 35: 5.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Geikie's Life of Christ. Trench on *The Miracles*. On unclean spirits, see Abbott's *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 13; Maudsley's *Pathology of Mind*, chap. 3, pp. 306-316; Forbes Winslow's *Diseases of the Brain*, pp. 179-211. On the cure of the dumb man, see Hook's *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 49; *Genius of the Gospel*, 282; Hare's *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 245; Milman's *History of Christianity*, 1: 253; Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Faith developed by difficulties. We see little of the power of water in the dewdrops or gently flowing river; but, when the waters meet with great rocks or masses of ice in their channel, then they rise up, by means of these obstacles, into terrible power, as a Niagara or spring floods. So steam, passing unimpeded into the air, is but a feeble mist; but when it is confined within the iron barriers of the engine, it develops a force that can move the machinery of the largest factories, and carry the largest ships across the ocean, in the face of wind and storm.—*P*.

II. The dumb speaking. The Roman soldier had a son that was dumb; but one day, seeing the enemy about to strike his father dead, in his agony of desire to save his father his voice came to him, and he cried out, and had the use of speech ever after. So

those Christians who are dumb about their religion, if once they realize the danger of their friends, cannot but be made to speak out the truth and love of the Saviour.

III. Hearing first, then speaking. The common range of the ear is about seven octaves, — or those sounds whose vibrations number more than 40 and less than 4,000 to a second. But individuals can sometimes hear sounds which are perfectly inaudible to others. Sir John Herschel says that nothing can be more surprising than to see two persons, neither of them deaf, the one complaining of the shrillness of the sound, while the other maintains that there is no sound at all (see Tyndall on Sound, p. 73). The editor of a Western paper says that he never heard the song of a bird, and for years believed that all the talk about the wonderful music of the birds was a mere piece of poetic imagination. So it is that men cannot speak of the love of God unless they have felt it. Many do not believe in the higher experiences, the indwelling of the Spirit, the blessedness of the life of perfect love, for their ears have not been opened. All is silent to them, where to others is the most glorious music. And they cannot speak of these things till Christ has first opened their ears. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 24. The discovered Saviour. "He could not be hid." I. Why Christ could not be hid: (1) because he was so famous; (2) because he was so beneficent; (3) because men were so needy. II. To whom cannot Christ be hid: (1) to those who feel their need; (2) who believe that he can save them; (3) who diligently seek him. — *Biblical Museum.*

2. Vers. 25-27. Here is an example of importunate, persevering, successful prayer.

3. Here is an illustration of the character of genuine faith.

4. The greatness of the faith is shown by the obstacles overcome by it: (1) she a foreigner; (2) the difficulty of the disease; (3) the repulse by the disciples (Matt. 15:23); (4) the seeming repulse by Jesus; (5) a current religious prejudice.

5. Ver. 28. True faith is ever humble, forgetting self in the desire to have others saved. Christ puts the strongest faith of his own children upon the severest trials. The trial had never been so sharp if her faith had not been so strong. — *Burkitt.*

6. The delays of God in answering our prayers come, not from unwillingness to answer, but to make the answer more perfect by increasing our faith as well as giving the object desired.

7. Ver. 32. Let us bring our friends to Jesus.

8. Vers. 32-36. Christ uses many and varied instrumentalities for the conversion of men.

9. The sorrows of this world cause even the best of beings to sigh.

10. When we hear Jesus, we can speak of him.

11. Ver. 35. Scarcely is the power of speech given to him, but he is ordered to be silent, in order that he might learn, or at least we through him, that the right use of the unbound tongue shall consist only in a free-will binding of the same to obedience. — *Stier.*

12. Ver. 37. All that Jesus does is done well, and at some time we shall see that all is well.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson gives us an example of THE DIFFICULTIES AND TRIUMPHS IN THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE HELP. (1) We find a woman *in search of divine help*, vers. 24-26. Note the greatness of her need, as from a distance she comes to the only one who can help. (2) We note in her case *five hinderances in the way*, vers. 26, 27. 1. She was a heathen, and had no claim on Christ as a Jew. 2. She wanted a very great favor. 3. She was opposed by the disciples, who should have helped her. 4. She was hindered by current religious prejudices. 5. Jesus himself delayed giving her what she desired, and apparently repulsed her. Show *why* he delayed the answer. Show also how there are like hinderances in our way. (3) *The triumphs of earnest seeking*, vers. 28-30. She gained her desire. She gained more, even a larger faith. (4) The lesson ends with *another example of successful search for divine aid*, vers. 31-37.

LESSON VII.—MAY 14.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES.—MARK 8: 1-21.

GOLDEN TEXT. *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*
—LUKE 12: 1.

TIME. Summer of A. D. 29; soon after the close of the last lesson.

PLACE. (1) The feeding of the 4,000 was in Decapolis, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, probably at some point near the southern end. (2) The questioning of the Pharisees was at Dalmanutha, a small town near Magdala, upon the opposite (western) side of the sea. (3) The conversation with his disciples was on the passage across the sea (probably from Capernaum) to Bethsaida, or on the shore after landing at Bethsaida.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT. Matt. 15: 29-39; 16: 1-12.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Lord, in the last lesson, returned to the Sea of Galilee on the eastern side, in Decapolis. Here he remained several days, attracting great numbers from the surrounding country. After teaching them for three days, and working a miracle for them, he crosses to the western side again, at Dalmanutha, and doubtless goes to Capernaum, his home, lying but a few miles to the north. Thence he again sails to the eastern side, and lands at Bethsaida.

1. In those days ¹the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

2. I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from far. And his dis- 4

¹ Matt. 15: 32.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Feeding of Four Thousand.—Vers. 1-9. 1. In those days. While Jesus was still in the region where the miracle at the close of the last lesson was performed. The time is apparently during Christ's period of retirement (after his withdrawal from Galilee), for the purpose of instructing his disciples. **The multitude being very great.** There were 4,000 men, besides women and children (Matt. 15: 38). It must be remembered that Jesus had not visited this region at all, except for the few hours when he healed the demoniacs of Gergesa, and afterward when he fed the 5,000; and the great body of the people now saw him for the first time.—*Andrews*. And that it was very easy in the East, in the warm months, for the population to camp out in the open country, their habits being simple, and their wants few. **Having nothing to eat;** i. e., the supply of food they had brought with them was exhausted by their three-days' absence from home (ver. 2). In the East, meat is used much less than with us. Milk, fruits, and various preparations of bread, are staple articles of diet. Three days' sojourn in the wilderness would not, therefore, require with them so great preparation as with us.—*Abbott*. **Called his disciples unto him.** Our Lord himself takes the first step.—*Schaff*.

2. I have compassion on the multitude. The Lord's compassion was called out by their physical want, which, however, resulted from their desire to be near him.—*Schaff*. **Been with me three days.** How different are these people from some Christians amongst us, who can scarcely tarry one hour with Christ's servants hearing the divine word!—*Oriander*. Hark! O my soul, how graciously thy Redeemer considers his servants. He keeps account how long they have been with him, and how far they are off from their own houses, and, casting all together, resolves to supply them. Oh, infinite goodness!—*Austin*.

3. They will faint by the way. Our Lord puts the matter to them as a question, without the slightest intimation of his intention to supply the want supernaturally.—*Alford*. **Came from far.** The case was much more urgent than on the former occasion. The

4. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

5. ¹ And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people.

7. And they had a few small fishes: and ² he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

ciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place? And he asked 5 them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the mul- 6 titude to sit down on the ground: And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. And they 7 had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them. And they did eat, 8 and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets.

¹ Matt. 15: 34. Mark 6: 38. ² Matt. 14: 19. Mark 6: 41.

multitude had followed him from the mountains. Such scanty provision as they had brought with them was consumed. There was no possibility of either going into neighboring towns, or quickly returning across the lake. They could only retire to their mountain homes through the passes by which they had followed him. They might, therefore, readily faint by the way. — *Lange*.

4. His disciples answered. They might very well have doubted whether he would choose a second time to put forth his creative might; whether there was in these present multitudes that spiritual hunger which was worthy of being met and rewarded by this interposition of divine power; whether these, too, were seeking the kingdom of heaven, and were so worthy to have all other things, those also which pertain to this lower life, to the supply of their present needs, added unto them. — *Trench*. From whence can a man satisfy. Many and many a time had the apostles been with multitudes before, and yet on one occasion only had he fed them. Further, to suggest to him a repetition of the feeding of the 5,000 would be a presumption which their ever-deepening reverence forbade, and forbade more than ever as they recalled how persistently he had refused to work a sign, such as this was, at the bidding of others. — *Farrar*. Still it is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten: the mighty interpositions of God's hand in former passages of men's lives fall out of their memories. Each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication: at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God's grace are exhausted and had come to an end. — *Trench*. In the wilderness. The wilderness was not a true desert, but a country district, remote from towns, and consequently from habitations, since, on account of wild beasts and robbers, the people lived almost wholly in towns and villages. — *Abbott*.

5. How many loaves? . . . With God it is all the same, whether there be little or much. — *Canstein*.

6. Commanded the people to sit down. Probably with the same orderly precision as before, by hundreds and by fifties, the women and children being in this instance also grouped together apart from the men. — *Ellicott*. (See Lesson III., Second Quarter.) Gave thanks. Christ's practice of giving thanks before meat is a precedent for the modern custom of asking a blessing at meal-time. — *Abbott*. And gave to his disciples. A symbol of the truth that only as Christ's ministers receive the truth from Christ can they distribute the truth to the people. — *Abbott*. They did set them before the people. Whatever may have been the feelings of his disciples before, no sooner had he given them the signal of his intention, than with perfect faith they became his ready ministers. — *Farrar*.

7. A few small fishes. The few barley-loaves and dried fishes: this was all their store as they went from village to village, or passed days and nights on the hills of Galilee. — *Ellicott*. Set them also before them. He had refused to feed them when they came because of the loaves; but now they had gathered together from other motives he provided for their wants. — *Tyng*. It is as instructive as it is remarkable, that on only two occasions did our Lord create food, and miraculously provide money on only one, — leaving the law of God not only to its righteous but beneficent course, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." — *Guthrie*.

8. Did eat and were filled. His miracles in bread and in wine were far less grand and less beautiful than the works of the Father they represented, in making the corn to grow in the valleys, and the grapes to drink the sunlight on the hillsides of the world, with all their infinitudes of tender gradation and delicate mystery of birth. — *MacDonald*. But

9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10. ¶ And ¹straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11. ²And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I

And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away. And straightway he entered into the boat with his 10 disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

And the Pharisees came 11 forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply 12 in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you,

¹ Matt. 15: 39. ² Matt. 12: 38; 16: 1. John 6: 30.

such a miracle as this leads us to see more clearly that *all* our food is as really from God as that which he made in a moment. When Christ is in the midst, the multitude never go away unfed. — *Lange*. We are not truly filled, but only when God feeds us. And they took up of the broken meat seven baskets. Not the small wicker *cophinoi* of the former miracle, but large baskets of rope, such as that in which St. Paul was lowered from the wall of Damascus. — *A. Curr*. More was left than they had at first. So God ever multiplies to his people the heavenly food they distribute to the needy. All that is sent away from our churches, to give the gospel to the heathen, is returned a hundred-fold upon the churches themselves. — *P*. Christ here teaches that *waste is wrong*. He says, I can create as lavishly as I will, but you are not to waste. Whether I give you much or little, it must all be used. Because I have given you the greater, you must not despise the smaller. Not one single fragment of my blessings is either to be abused or neglected. — *Houson*.

9. Four thousand, besides women and children (Matt. 15: 38). And he sent them away. And then kindly and peacefully, and with no exhibition on the part of the populace of that spurious excitement which had marked the former miracle, the Lord and his apostles joined in sending away the rejoicing and grateful throng. — *Farrar*.

11. His Enemies seek a Sign. — Vers. 10-13. 10. Entered into a ship. It was "*the*" boat which was regularly at the service of our Saviour. It could easily, on such a small lake as Gennesaret, be hailed from its mooring-place when once it was known that the Saviour was at hand. — *Morison*. Dalmanutha. Leaving the eastern side of the lake, to which his wanderings had led him, Jesus now once more crossed to [Dalmanutha, a small village in] the neighborhood of Magdala, at the lower end of the plain of Gennesareth, and close to Capernaum. — *Geikie*. He probably went on to his home at Capernaum. — *Andrews*.

11. Pharisees came forth. He had scarcely re-appeared in the neighborhood in which most of his wonderful works had been wrought, when, once again, in their old spirit of contemptuous challenge, the Pharisees demand that he would show them a sign from heaven. Now, however, for the first time, the Sadducees appear by their side (Matt. 16: 1), leaguely themselves with the Pharisees in a joint rejection of Christ. — *Hanna*. Pharisees and Sadducees, Christ is always crucified between two thieves. — *Tertullian*. All wicked men and unbelievers unite against Jesus. — *Quesnel*. Seeking a sign from heaven. Intimating that they were not sure about the "ways and means" of the miracles he was working. There was scope, they insinuated, for illusion or delusion. Indeed, for aught that they could tell, Satan might have his hand in all these wonders! It was a miracle of the nature of a phenomenal *curiosity* that they pleaded for, — not considering that if such a "spectacular" exhibition had been made, they would have been the very first, and the loudest, to exclaim that it must be legerdemain, *for who could imagine that God was going to entertain them, like children in a theatre, with mere displays of the marvellous?* They were, in short, in a mood to find fault with every thing that our Saviour should do, so long as he did not become like one of themselves. — *Morison*. The Jews had been, and were, most blind to the signs of the times, at all the great crises of their history, and particularly to the times in which they were *then* living. The sceptre had departed from Judah, the law-giver no longer came forth from between his feet; yet they discerned none of these things. — *Alford*. Tempting him; that is, *trying him*. It will be impossible to understand *temptation* correctly, in the various branches of its signification, if this, the radical meaning, be let go. It is the motive that determines whether the trial be good or bad. In the case before us the motive was base, and therefore the trial was bad. — *Morison*.

12. Sighed deeply in his spirit. This sigh, or groan, came from his heart, showing how keenly he felt the opposition he encountered. They showed more decided enmity; but the plain prediction of his death, which so soon followed (ver. 31), shows that he knew the

say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14. ¶ ¹ Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15. ² And he charged them, saying, Take heed, be-

There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And he 13 left them, and again entering into the boat departed to the other side.

And they forgot to take 14 bread; and they had not in the boat with them more than one loaf. And he charged 15 them, saying, Take heed, be-

¹ Matt. 16: 5. ² Matt. 16: 6. Luke 12: 1.

crisis was approaching. — *Schaff*. The language is very strong. These glimpses into the interior of the Redeemer's heart, in which our Evangelist abounds, are more precious than rubies. The state of the Pharisaic heart, which prompted this desire for a fresh sign, went to his very soul. — *J. F. and B.* Everywhere, as he looked, he saw that soul that had sprung a pure, holy, happy thing from his hands, now filled with selfishness and pride, and envy and impurity, and all ungodliness, — that soul that had been destined for the companionship of God and angels, now ripening for the blackness of darkness forever! And can we doubt that his was an anguish at the sight into which no finite mind can enter? — *Caird*. And saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? He speaks to himself, as it were, — reflectively, bewailing. — *Morison*. They had plenty of signs, — signs in nature, in their own hearts: their history was full of them; signs in the prophets, from Sinai. Christ had given them a multitude of signs and wonders. They had no need of more. The enemies always repeat objections which have already been thoroughly answered and refuted. — *Hedinger*. There shall no sign be given. He gives no sign to those who had already signs enough, to those whose obstinate minds nothing would convince. — *T. Ford*. No "sign" could avail where there was no sympathy. The truth he came to proclaim appealed to the heart, and must be its own evidence, winning its way by its own divine beauty, into humble and ready breasts. — *Geikie*. This generation. He does not refer exclusively to the critics who were standing in his presence. His view had expanded till it embraced the great body of the people. — *Morison*.

13. And he left them. For there are limits to forbearance in dealing with creatures who abuse indefinitely the freedom of their will. — *Morison*. In the Greek this is a strong expression, meaning more than a mere change of place; because, from etymology and usage, it suggests the idea of abandonment, leaving them to themselves, giving them up in hopeless unbelief. — *Alexander*. He did not press his mercies on those who rejected them. As in after-days his nation were suffered to prefer their robber and murderer to the Lord of life, so now the Galileans were suffered to keep their Pharisees and lose their Christ. — *Farrar*. Observe that in Christ scepticism, even the most obdurate, awoke pity rather than indignation or a spirit of controversy. — *Abbott*. Departed. He doubtless went to his home in Capernaum at this time, it being but a short distance away. — *Andrews*. His departure that autumn evening might well have saddened his heart. It was his final rejection on the very spot where he had labored most; and he was leaving it, to return, indeed, for a passing visit, but never to appear again publicly, or to teach, or work miracles. As the boat swept out into the lake, and the whole scene opened before him, it was no wonder that he sighed deeply in spirit, borne down by the thought of the darkened mind, the perverted conscience, and the stony heart, that had rejected the things for their peace. — *Geikie*. To the other side. Probably to the region of Bethsaida, whence he immediately went up into Cesarea Philippi.

III. The Leaven of the Pharisees. — Vers. 14-21. 14. The disciples had forgotten to take bread. The passage would take five or six hours, so that the neglect might cause some inconvenience. It may indicate some trouble of the disciples' minds. Judas, who had specially the charge of the provisions, was certainly not unlikely to have been shaken by the Pharisees' question, and disappointed by the Master's answer. — *Cook*. One loaf. The loaf was a thin cake or cracker, made of flour and water or milk, ordinarily mixed with leaven, and left to rise, and baked in the oven. It was generally about a finger's breadth in thickness. Three were not too much for a meal for a single person. — *Abbott*.

15. Take heed; beware. The Saviour thus gives a double caveat or caution. — *Petter*. Leaven. The Jews were well acquainted with this simile. It was used in making bread, to swell the flour and make it puff and light. It was very silent and effectual in its working. It would finally ferment and pervade the whole mass. Under this familiar figure, therefore, he represents the doctrines of these powerful sects who were false teachers. — *Jacobus*. It is not clear that the leaven, yeast, or "sour-dough," in use among the Jews, was

ware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* ¹because we have no bread.

17. And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? ²perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19. ³When I brake the five loaves among five thou-

ware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned ¹⁶one with another, saying, We have no bread. And Jesus ¹⁷perceiving it saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and ¹⁸having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When ¹⁹I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many

¹ Matt. 16: 7. ² Mark 6: 52. ³ Matt. 14: 20. Mark 6: 43. Luke 9: 17. John 6: 13.

regarded as a corrupting thing. But it was insinuitive, penetrative, and permeative. — *Morison*. Of the Pharisees (and Sadducees, see Matt. 16: 1). The leaven; i.e., the teachings of the Pharisees (Matt. 16: 12). The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy. But the Sadducees, the "liberal Jews" of that age, went to the other extreme. The reference is, therefore, not to what they taught in common, but to the mode and spirit of their teaching, in both cases *hypocrisy*. The emphasis here laid on false teachings is suggestive. Principles, tendencies, "*teachings*," are most permeating, and, if evil, most dangerous. — *Schaff*. No word more suitable could have been employed. It exactly describes the small beginnings of false doctrines; the subtle, quiet way in which it insensibly pervades a man's religion; the deadly power with which it changes the whole character of his Christianity. Here, in fact, lies the great danger of false doctrine: if it approached us under its true colors, it would do little harm; the great secret of its success is in its subtlety and likeness of truth. Every error in religion has been said to be a truth abused. — *Ryle*. The leaven against which Christ warns his disciples is that of formalism and pretence, of sneering unbelief, and of the craft and cunning of worldliness. — *Abbott*. Leaven of Herod. The Herodians were more a political than a religious sect, the dependents and supporters of the dynasty of Herod. These, though directly opposed to the Pharisees, were yet united with them in the persecution of our Lord. And their leaven was the same, *hypocrisy*. — *Alford*. Herod was a Sadducee, a sect who taught that there was no future life, no immortal soul. Their leaven was *worldliness* as well as hypocrisy.

16. Reasoned among themselves. They deliberate over the matter within their own circle, without saying any thing to Jesus, who, however, from his being able to penetrate their thoughts, is quite aware of what is going on. — *Meyer*. Because ye have no bread. The disciples thought that Christ reproved them for their carelessness in forgetting to provide bread, lest they corrupt themselves by using bread mixed with the Pharisees' leaven. The incident illustrates the spiritual dulness of the disciples, and refutes the idea of one school of modern rationalists, that many of the spiritual ideas of the Gospels originated with the Evangelists, and were imputed by them to Christ. So far from originating any, they could not even understand his. — *Abbott*.

17. When Jesus knew it. Perhaps from observation, perhaps by that immediate knowledge of the heart of which the New Testament affords so many illustrations. — *Abbott*. Scarcely had Jesus ended with his enemies, when he must begin again with his friends. — *Braune*. Saith unto them, Why reason ye? The *nine* questions following each other in rapid succession show how deeply he was hurt at this want of spiritual apprehension, and with their low thoughts of him, as if he would utter so solemn warning on so petty a subject. — *J. F. and B.* He was grieved to think that they should get perplexed on these matters, and that they should allow their minds to lie grovelling among them, while they should be soaring to the heights of great first truths and eternal realities. — *Morison*.

18. Do ye not remember? Christ does not explain; but he chides their dulness, then repeats his warning, and leaves them to study out its meaning for themselves, which they do. Observe the fact that the disciples remembered definitely the two miracles, and the exact number of baskets of fragments, but did not learn their spiritual lessons. A striking illustration of "having eyes, yet seeing not." — *Abbott*.

19. When I brake the five. By drawing attention to their store at the first, the reality and extent of the miracle became the more plain. — *Biblical Museum*. The disciples are not blamed for failing to apprehend higher things, on the ground that they were qualified to apprehend lower and earthly things. The point of the reprehension is more reasonable. They had, by the gift of God, the powers that fitted them for apprehending the higher

sand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20. And ¹when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21. And he said unto them, How is it that ²ye do not understand?

baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketfuls of broken pieces took ye up? And they say unto him, Seven. And he said unto them, Do ye not yet understand?

¹ Ver. 8. Matt. 15:37. ² Ver. 17. Mark 6:52.

things; and yet they failed to exercise these powers as they should have done. — *Morison*. They say unto him, Twelve. Instead of simply affirming that they remembered the whole wonderful reality, they state the number of the basketfuls which they took up; and thus they do more than acknowledge the fact of their remembrance. — *Morison*. True to his method of education, our Lord does not himself interpret his words, but is, as it were, content to suggest the train of thought which led to the interpretation. — *Ellicott*.

20. And they said, Seven. Their memory was clear as to the facts, though their intelligence was confused as to the appropriate principles which they should deduce from the facts. — *Morison*. Profuse as were our Lord's miracles, we see from this that they were not wrought at random, but that he carefully noted their minutest details. Even the different kinds of baskets used at the two miraculous feedings — so carefully noted in the two narratives — are here also referred to; the one smaller, of which there were twelve; the other much larger, of which there were seven. — *David Brown, D.D.*

21. Do not understand? "Do ye not yet understand?" St. Matthew adds that the meaning then flashed on them (Matt. 16:12). — *Cook*. Do ye not understand; i.e., after these miracles. Mark stops with this brief question, because in writing for Gentile readers his main design was to show the condition of the twelve, rather than to warn against Jewish notions. — *Schaff*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Geikie's *Life of Christ*. Trench and MacDonald. On the miracles at Dalmanutha, see Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 425; and Robinson's *Researches*, 3:278. On the nature of leaven, see President Hitchcock's *Religious Truths illustrated by Science*, p. 223: "The Catalytic Power of the Gospel." On seeking a sign, see *Sermons*, by R. Hall, J. Wesley, Cecil, Skinner (N. P. 6), "The Signs of the Times."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **Leaven: its method of working.** Leaven is an example of those changes in bodies which are called catalysis. In catalysis the mere presence of a certain body among the particles of another produces the most extensive changes among those particles, and yet the body thus operating is itself unaffected. This is the case with leaven. One sees from the commotion among its particles, that a change is going on in its internal condition, and that new compounds are forming out of its elements. Introduced in that state into the meal, it communicates a change to the whole mass analogous to that which it is itself experiencing. *One part mixed with 2,000 parts will change the whole* in a few hours. It had long been a mystery how so small a quantity of one substance should be able to effect such a change upon so large a mass of another. But the discovery that leaven contains a *fungus plant* which multiplies with prodigious rapidity, and is sustained by the matter into which the leaven is introduced, furnishes an explanation. This *yeast plant* consists of myriads of cells, scarcely more than one three-thousandth of an inch in diameter. And it has the power of converting sugar into alcohol and carbonic acid, and finally into vinegar. Note the two principles: (1) It needs but a very small quantity of leaven to produce a complete change in a very large amount of farinaceous matter. (2) It is only necessary to start the process in one or a few spots in order to have it permeate the entire heap (unless, as in bread, the process be stopped by heat). — *Dr. Hitchcock's Religious Truths illustrated by Science*, pp. 224-226.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. We should seek Jesus, even at the cost of physical discomfort.

2. Man's necessity is God's opportunity.

3. Ver. 2. Jesus has infinite compassion for the needs and sufferings of men.

4. Men resemble the gods in nothing so much as in doing good to their fellow-creatures. — *Cicero*.

5. Ver. 8. Good, the more it is communicated, more abundant grows. — *Milton*.
6. Ver. 11. (Seeking a sign.) It is evil to complain that God does not give us more helps, when he has already given us an abundance.
7. If we will not repent and believe with the helps God has given, with the Bible, Christ, the Holy Spirit, good influences, we would not repent, no matter how many more he should give us.
8. Ver. 12. Jesus is full of sorrow at the wickedness and perversity of men.
9. Ver. 13. Evil doctrines are like leaven, — corrupting, pervasive, propagating, working in secret.
10. Worldliness and hypocrisy are two opposite dangers, of which we must beware.
11. Ver. 17. We are to blame for want of more spiritual insight.
12. God teaches us the truth by leading us to see and discover it.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Here we have some LESSONS FROM OUR DAILY BREAD. (1) *Jesus gives us our daily bread* (vers. 1-9), sympathizing with our bodily needs. He would, by this, point us to *the true bread of life*. (2) *We have an example of the leaven of the Pharisees* (vers. 11-13), a specimen of their hypocrisy, — though many now are guilty of the same. (3) *We have a warning against the leaven of the Pharisees*. The workings of evil are in many respects like leaven, and we need the same warnings as did the disciples.

LESSON VIII. — MAY 21.

SEEING AND CONFESSING CHRIST. — MARK 8: 22-33.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* — MATT. 16: 16.

TIME. — Summer of A. D. 29. Soon after the close of the last lesson.

PLACE. — The healing of the blind man was at Bethsaida-Julias, situated on the north-east coast of the Sea of Galilee, at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake. The conversation with his disciples was on the way from Bethsaida to Cesarea-Philippi, about 25 or 30 miles to the north-east.

RÜLERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (16th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (33d year); Herod Philip, of Iturea, etc. (including Cesarea-Philippi) (33d year).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — The healing of the blind man (vers. 22-26) is found only in Mark. The conversation with his disciples (vers. 27-31) is found also in Matt. 16: 13-23. Luke 9: 18-22.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Lord, seeking retirement, takes ship probably at Capernaum for Bethsaida. It was on the passage across the lake, or just as they landed on the shore, that the preceding conversation with his disciples, recorded in our last lesson, took place. Arriving at Bethsaida he heals the blind man, the beginning of to-day's lesson, and then proceeds on his journey, still conversing with his disciples.

22. ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

And they come unto Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Healing the Blind Man at Bethsaida.** — Vers. 22-26. 22. **And he cometh.** From Capernaum, where he had touched shore on his way from Dalmanutha, farther south on the same side of the Sea of Galilee (chap. 8: 10, 13). **Bethsaida** (house of fish). A town situated on both sides of the Jordan as it enters the Sea of Galilee. The western, or Galilee, portion was but a village; the eastern was built up into a city, and called Bethsaida-Julias. (See Lesson III., Second Quarter.) **And they bring a blind man unto him.** The people, not the disciples, brought him. He was brought, (1) either because he could not find the way alone, or (2) because he had not faith that would induce him to go, and so

23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when ¹he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25. After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

to touch him. And he took ²³ hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught? And ²⁴ he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold *them* as trees, walking. Then again he ²⁵ laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked steadfastly, and was restored, and saw all

¹ Mark 7:33.

was brought by the faith of his friends. — *P.* This man was not *born* blind. He had evidently seen men and trees aforetime. — *Lange.* And besought him to touch him. As though the touch was necessary to heal. — *Schaff.*

23. Took the blind man by the hand. Great humility! that he might gain his confidence, and raise his expectation. — *Bengel.* He led him by the hand. Behold the Son of God leading the blind by a way that he knew not! Thus many are led by Jesus to the place where they are converted. They know not whither the events of Providence are guiding them; they know not why they are led from one place to another, why one path is blocked up and another opened before them, till at length they find that all was arranged to bring about this blessed end, — the opening of their blind eyes. — *Tyng.* Led him out of the town. The man, it would appear, did not belong in Bethsaida. He had probably been brought from one of the adjoining hamlets. Had he cured him in the town, the man would have become a public spectacle, and the rush and crush of the excited multitude would still more have interfered with the spiritual and physical requirements of the disciples, and with the limitations of our Lord's own humanity. — *Morison.* The reason may have been the unbelief of the place (Matt. 11:21), since the man was particularly commanded not to go back there (ver. 26). — *Schaff.* His purpose in this was, that apart from the din and tumult and interruptions of the crowd, in solitude and silence, the man might be more recipient of deep and lasting impressions; even as the same Lord does now oftentimes lead a soul apart when he would speak with it, or heal it; sets it in the solitude of a sick-chamber, or in loneliness of spirit, or takes away from it earthly companions and friends. — *Trench.* And when he had spit on his eyes. Saliva was regarded as medicinal by the ancients. Why Christ used it here, is not certain. Christ chose to employ an external sign (1) partly to do honor to the use of means, though it was no help to him; (2) partly to encourage this man's faith by the sense of *touch*, as he could not *see*; and (3) partly to express by a symbol his prerogative of working how, where, and whereby he pleaseth. — *Jacobus.* (4) Perhaps (this I am inclined to think the true explanation) to make as little impression with the miracle as possible, because he was now seeking retirement, and wished to avoid the throng and publicity which miracles always brought upon him. — *Abbott.* And put his hands upon him. This is the third of the three successive acts in healing, instead of the usual touch: (1) led him out of the town; (2) spit on his eyes; (3) put hands on him. Asked him if he saw aught; i.e., any thing. He desired to draw, and draw out, the attention of the man to the process of restoration. — *Morison.* The cure was not complete, the faith of the blind man being probably imperfect. — *Godwin.* Jesus would have him use the little faith he had, — try to see. — *Biblical Museum.* A weak beginning is yet a beginning; and in God's methods a little is intended to become gradually greater. — *Canstein.*

24. And he looked up. Namely, toward the source of light, as was natural. That was the first visual movement which the man made. — *Morison.* When, therefore, the Lord puts to us this question, if we can see aught, let us, like this man, look up. — *Stier.* I see men as trees, walking. Certain moving forms about him, but without the power of discerning their shape or magnitude: trees he should have accounted them from their height, but men from their motion. The gracious Lord, then, who would not reject him, but who could as little cure him so long as there was on his part this desperation (despair) of healing, gave a glimpse of the blessing, that he might kindle in him a longing for the fullness of it, that he might show him how he was indeed an opener of the blind eyes. — *Trench.*

25. He put his hands again upon his eyes. Perhaps the one operation perfectly restored the eyes, while the other imparted immediately the *faculty of using them*. It is the only recorded example of a *progressive* cure, and it certainly illustrates similar methods in the spiritual kingdom. — *J. F. and B.* Saw every man clearly. "All things." — *Ellicott.* Of course our Lord *could* have healed the man with a word. There may have been some-

26. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town,¹ nor tell *it* to any in the town.

27. ¶ ² And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

things clearly. And he sent 26 him away to his home, saying, Do not even enter into the village. And Jesus went 27 forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Cesarea Philippi: and in the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I

¹ Matt. 8: 4. Mark 5: 43. ² Matt. 16: 13. Luke 9: 18.

thing in the man's spiritual condition which called for this method to develop his faith. Nor was the mode without an important lesson for the disciples, at this juncture. The work of grace, though always wrought by Christ, is often a gradual process, in which other agencies are apparently involved, — a protest against the notions which insist upon sudden illumination and joy as a necessary accompaniment of conversion. While the man is not represented as active in curing himself, he follows Christ, who leads him by the hand, looks up when Christ bids, and tells our Lord both of the cure and its imperfection. — *Schaff*. This example illustrates the Saviour's method, in the spiritual kingdom, of leading men to apprehend the truth gradually, as they can bear and improve it. He who in his blindness consents to be led *in the dark*, by Christ, is led toward the light. His sight may come to him gradually: if so, he is not to be discouraged; nor are those that see clearly to be impatient at the delay. The end of Christ's ministry of grace is, that the blind not only see, but see with discrimination, and clearly. — *Abbott*.

26. Sent him away to his house. Bethsaida was not the place of his residence: he was to go immediately from the place to his own home. — *Maclear*. Naturally, he might have gone blazing the cure abroad. But our Lord, for several reasons, would have him *go home*, and make it known. Every converted man has a great work to do in his own domestic circle. *Religion in families* is a most eminent means of spreading the gospel. The Church of Christ has been perpetuated by a godly house. — *Jacobus*. Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town; i.e., of those belonging to the town whom he might meet. — *Abbott*. "Nor tell it to any in the town," is omitted in the New Version. As in other works of healing, so in this, our Lord seems to have prescribed quietude after, as well as before, the miracle, as a spiritual discipline — partly, we may believe, because the work that had been done called for prayer for the right use of the new, or the restored, power; partly (as in Matt. 12: 16), because he would not seem himself to court the fame of publicity. — *Ellicott*. With this miracle St. Mark winds up the account of the journey commenced in chap. 7: 24. As our Lord set out then from Capernaum, he probably now returned thither, before his last journey in Northern Palestine. — *Cook*.

II. Peter's Faith and Confession. — Vers. 27-30. 27. We here begin the *second great division* of our Saviour's ministry on earth, introductory to his sufferings and death. — *Alford*. Went out. Went out is the word regularly used in this Gospel when a departure from one scene of work to another is notified. In this case, our Lord, leaving the district in which he had hitherto been chiefly working, proceeded in a north-easterly direction along the valley of the Upper Jordan. — *Cook*. And his disciples. Their presence is here mentioned expressly, calling attention to the object of a journey through a district to a great extent heathen, and lately traversed, viz., their special instruction (Mark 9: 31). — *Cook*. And perhaps for their safety. — *Ellicott*. Into the towns. Away from the populous cities. The solitude of the beautiful district, whither the Saviour now journeyed, is illustrated by the fact that it is the only district in Palestine where a recent traveller found the pelican of the wilderness (Ps. 102: 6). — *Maclear*. Jesus might expect to find in this secluded country the solitude which he had sought in vain in other parts of the Holy Land. — *Godet*. Cesarea Philippi. A city at the north-east extremity of Palestine and at the foot of Mount Lebanon, anciently called *Paneas*, and now *Banias*. It was called *Cesarea Philippi* by Herod Philip, who rebuilt it in honor of his patron Tiberius *Cesar*, and added *Philippi*, after his own name, to distinguish it from *Cesarea* on the Mediterranean coast. — *Binney*. It has now about fifty houses, many ruins of columns, towers, temples, a bridge, and a remarkable castle. — *Schaff*. And by the way. His conversation by the way: (1) The turn it often took when the disciples were left to themselves, — disputes concerning greatness, etc. (2) The turn Christ gave to it, — inquiries concerning his mission and person. Learn: 1, Avoid foolish and worldly talk; 2, Improve passing opportunities; 3, Let your talk be often about the Saviour. — *Biblical Museum*. Whom do men say that I am? The following conversation refers to three points: (1) The Christ. (2) The suffering Christ. (3) The disciples of the suffering Christ. The object of this first question is evidently to prepare

28. And they answered, ¹ John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, ² Thou art the Christ.

am? And they told him, say-²⁸ ing, John the Baptist: and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. And he ²⁹ asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art

¹ Matt. 14:2. ² Matt. 16:16. John 6:69; 11:27.

the way for the next. — *Godet*. It was a time of at least seeming failure and partial desertion. "From that time," St. John relates (6:66-70), "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." He had turned to the twelve, and asked in tones of touching sadness, "Will ye also go away?" and had received from Peter the re-assuring answer, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" But in the mean time there had been signs of wavering. It was time, if we may so speak, that they should be put to a crucial test, and the alternative of faith, or want of faith, pressed home upon their consciences. — *Ellicott*.

28. **John the Baptist.** Who had been killed by Herod a few months before, now restored to life. That was one popular notion regarding him, circulating, no doubt, chiefly among those who had never seen him. Herod Antipas entertained it (chap. 6:16). **Elias.** The great ideal of a prophet and spiritual reformer. It was very generally expected that he was to return to the earth in connection with the Messiah's advent (Mal. 4:5). — *Morison*. **One of the prophets.** The Jews believed that at the coming of the Messiah the prophets were to rise again. The nearer still the "kingdom of heaven" came, by so much the more did they dream of the resurrection of the prophets. — *Lightfoot*. The Jews of our Lord's time might have found out, if they had been honest inquirers, that Jesus of Nazareth was neither John the Baptist, nor Elias, nor an old prophet, but the Christ of God. The speculative Christian of our own day might easily satisfy himself on every point which is needful to salvation, if he would really, candidly, and humbly seek the teaching of the Spirit. — *Ryle*. They did not declare their belief in him as the Messiah himself, doubtless for this reason, that the whole ministry of Christ appeared to them to stand in contradiction to their Messianic expectations. — *Olshausen*.

29. **Whom say ye that I am?** Twice does Jesus put this question, in order to impress upon them the importance of entertaining a right opinion concerning him. *Of all religious ideas, none are so important as the right idea of Christ.* — *Genius of the Gospel*. He had never openly spoken of his Messiahship. It was his will that the revelation should dawn gradually on the minds of his children; that it should spring more from the truths he spake, and the life he lived, than from the wonders which he wrought. It was in the *Son of man* that they were to recognize the *Son of God*. — *Farrar*. The time was come when it was of the greatest moment that they should have a settled conception of his real character and mission. — *Morison*. As for the disciples, they needed a religious confession thus deeply rooted in their convictions, to enable them to confront the trying future on which they were about to enter. — *Meyer*. This was the decisive moment in which the separation of the New Testament from the Old Testament theocracy was to be made. The hour had come for the utterance of a distinct Christian confession. — *Lange*. **And Peter answered.** With that honest readiness and impulsiveness which were so characteristic of his nature, and which fitted him for being a leader of the little circle. — *Morison*. **Thou art the Christ;** Matthew adds, *the Son of the living God*. This confession not only sees in Jesus the promised Messiah, but in the Messiah recognizes the divine nature. — *Cambridge Bible*. The confession of Peter is the first fundamental Christian confession of faith, and the germ of the Apostles' Creed. — *Lange*. It was a decisive answer, and given as out of a higher inspiration. The Lord himself, as we learn from Matt. 16:17, traced the thought to its divine source. And yet it was, no doubt, founded on evidence which the disciple had diligently studied, and logically construed to his own inner satisfaction. It was evidence which, when impartially weighed in the balance of judicial reason, warranted the conclusion. — *Morison*. It was, indeed, an amazing utterance. The twelve had been the daily witnesses of the human simplicity and poverty of his life, his homelessness, his weary wanderings afoot, and all the circumstances of his constant humiliation. Yet they had broken through the hereditary national prejudice of their race, and had seen in their lowly rejected Master the true Lord of the new kingdom of God. Nor is the fact less wonderful that the life and words of Jesus, seen thus closely, should have created such a lofty and holy conception of his spiritual greatness, amid all the counteractions of outward fact and daily familiarity. In spite of all, he was the King-Messiah to those who had known him best. — *Geikie*.

Matthew says (16:17-19) that immediately after this confession Jesus called Peter *the rock*, and declared that on the *rock* Peter, or the rock of the truth he had confessed, he would

30. ¹ And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31. And ² he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

the Christ. And he charged ³⁰ them that they should tell no man of him. And he began ³¹ to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake the saying ³² openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But ³³

¹ Matt. 16: 20. ² Matt. 16: 21; 17: 22. Luke 9: 22.

build the Church; and gave to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. All this naturally follows from a reception of the great central truth of Christianity; and all who really receive it and live on it are rocks on which Christ builds his Church, and by that truth unlock the kingdom of heaven to the souls of others. — *P.*

30. Tell no man of him. There is, it must be remembered, "a time to keep silence," as well as "a time to speak" (Eccles. 3: 7). And the state of society throughout Palestine was such that direct public, or even private, promulgation, on the part of the disciples, of our Lord's Messiah-hood, would, at that particular time, have done much injury and little or no good. — *Morison*. Christ's Messianic life had to be actually completed before his disciples were to testify of him as the Christ. — *Lange*. Men would have suspected that he was affecting the Jewish throne, and cherishing designs at variance with the rule of the Herods and the supremacy of the Cæsars. — *Cardinal Cajetan*.

III. The True Idea of the Messiah. — Vers. 31-33. 31. And he began to teach them. From this time the teaching of Jesus to his disciples, and also to the world at large, assumed a new character. — *Andrews*. He began to instruct the disciples; for their minds, like the minds of most of their compeers in the nation, were full of fancies in reference to the Messiah. — *Morison*. Gradually, as they were able to bear it, he showed them how the great purpose of God in the Messiah must be effected through his death. — *Andrews*. The Son of man. This title was in itself, to Jewish ears, a clear assertion of Messiahship. In consequence of the prophecy in Dan. 7: 13, the Son of man became a popular and official title of the Messiah. As the Son of man, our Lord was the Messiah, a true member of the human race, its pattern and representative. — *Liddon's Bampton Lectures*. Must suffer many things. In this strange way carrying out the true idea of the Messiah (Isa. 53). Rejected of the elders, chief priests, and scribes. The three constituents of the Sanhedrim. The elders (leading men) would be chosen because of their material and political influence; the high priests, because of their elevated ecclesiastical position; the scribes, because of their literary and rabbinical qualifications. — *Morison*. Now, for the first time, the disciples received full and clear information of the sufferings and death of Christ. The full confession of faith being made and accepted, it was important that the true, specific character of the Messiah should be set forth as it had been revealed by the greatest of prophets, in contradistinction from the notions then popularly entertained and still shared by the disciples. — *Cook*. And be killed. The atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, the fulfilment of all the sacrifices of the temple. He foresaw it all, and yet went steadily onward to the consummation of his mediatorial career! — *Morison*. After three days. Long enough to make the fact of his death certain. — *Cook*. Rise again. Some grand mediatorial purpose was to be subserved by the death; but the state of death was to be only temporary, and for an exceedingly brief period. The Saviour of men must be alive for evermore. There were indeed grand purposes which could not be realized unless he lived. — *Morison*.

32. And he spake that saying openly. Without reserve, publicly. The previous statements respecting this subject, made by our Lord, were expressed in figurative language. — *Godwin*. And Peter began to rebuke him. The same Peter who but just now had made so noble and spiritual a confession, and received so high a blessing, now shows the weak and carnal side of his character. The expression of spiritual faith may, and frequently does, precede the betraying of carnal weakness; and never is this more probable than when the mind has just been uplifted, as Peter's was, by commendation and lofty promise. — *Alford*. Peter, elated with his own spiritual insight, and the blessing pronounced upon himself, with the impetuosity of his nature attempted to take his Lord to account for apparently contradicting that confession by announcing his sufferings and death. — *J. P. Thompson*. It arose also from his love for his Master, and desire that he should not suffer so, or leave them. — *P.* This world has many Peters, who wish to be wiser than Christ, and to prescribe to him what it is needful to do. — *Hofmeister*. No

33. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

wonder if novices now think themselves wiser than their wisest teachers. — *Baxter*. It is worthy of note, that the faults of Peter are most openly acknowledged by Mark, whose Gospel is the record of Peter's own preaching, and was probably dictated by Peter himself.

33. Turned about and looked on his disciples. A sudden movement is indicated. Looking at all, he singles out Peter for special warning. — *Cook*. Rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan. Christ saw, with the lightning glance of his spirit, in the words of Peter a suggestion not so much of his as of Satan's. — *Trench*. The very words which he had used to the Tempter in the wilderness (Matt. 4:10); for in truth the apostle was adopting the very argument which the great enemy had adopted there. — *Maclear*. Satan is most busy to seduce us when we are most highly exalted and favored by Christ. — *Lange*. In turning from Peter our Lord was really putting "behind" him the evil being who was tempting him through Peter. For thou savorest not the things of God, but the things of men. The Saviour, in these words, speaks home to the personality of Peter. He pays no further heed, as it were, to the darker presence behind. Peter, under the influence of that presence, was suffering the eye of his intelligence to be eclipsed; and hence he was allowing his interests to gather clusteringly around what would be immediately agreeable to merely human feelings, instead of what would be agreeable to the mind and heart of God. — *Morison*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel*, pp. 295-321. Smith's *Testimony of the Messiah*. Geikie's *Life of Christ*. On Cesarea Philippi, see Tristram's *Land of Israel* and *Rob Roy on the Jordan*. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 397, etc. Liddon's *Bampton Lectures: Our Lord's Divinity*, chap. i. Hawker's *Divinity of Christ*: "The Testimony of the Apostles."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. In the very interesting account which Cheselden has given (*Anatomy*, p. 301, 1768, London) of the feelings of a child, who, having been blind from his birth, was enabled to see, a curious confirmation of the truthfulness of this narrative occurs: "When he first saw, he knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude; but, being told what things were, whose forms he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe that he might know them again." — *Trench*.

II. Our eyes opened. Many persons are like Jonah asleep in a storm. Their eyes do not see the danger around them, nor the storm of God's wrath against sin, or the folly of running away from God. Very much of our growth and progress depends on better seeing, — seeing more of the meaning of God's word, seeing God, seeing eternal realities, seeing the significance of life, seeing opportunities of doing good, seeing better ideals and possibilities. Heaven and earth, so full of blessings and truths and opportunities and glories, are often invisible to us, as the chariots and horses defending Elisha were invisible to his servant. Let us all pray for more sight — and insight. "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." — *P*.

III. Divinity of Christ. "I know men: Jesus is not a man! Jesus is not a philosopher; for his proofs are miracles, and from the first his disciples adored him. Alexander, Cesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but on what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him. I die before my time; and my body will be given back to the earth, to become food for worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and is extending over the whole earth!" — *Napoleon Bonaparte*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 22. Let us lead the spiritually blind to Christ.
2. Ver. 24. The progress into the light is often gradual.
3. But by one degree of sight we gain faith for more perfect seeing.
4. One great need of men is that the eyes of their minds be opened.

5. Ver. 27. Of all ideas, none are so important as the religious. Of all religious ideas, none are so important as the right idea of Christ. — *Thomas*.
6. Ver. 29. Christ's character, works, and kingdom on earth, compel us to believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
7. On that fact, and the belief in it, has been built the whole kingdom of God in the world.
8. Ver. 32. Many a person thinks himself wiser than the Bible or than God.
9. Note the rapidity with which men pass from a proper to an improper mood. — *Thomas*.
10. Ver. 32. Note the readiness of Christ to acknowledge the proper and rebuke the improper mood.
11. Ver. 33. Our best friend becomes our worst enemy when he employs his friendship to tempt us to evil. — *Abbott*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The point of this lesson is the answer to the question, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? He is seen first (1) as *the giver of sight to the blind*, vers. 22-26. There is much need for all of us that our eyes be opened (see Illustrative, 11.). Then he uses this miracle as a parable, and proceeds to give spiritual sight to the disciples. For (2) there is *spiritual blindness, wrong ideas about Christ* (vers. 27, 28); but (3) Christ removes this, and gives *spiritual sight, the true ideas about Christ as the Messiah* (vers. 29-33), the things of God as distinguished from the hopes and plans that men would use.

LESSON IX. — MAY 28.

FOLLOWING CHRIST. — MARK 8:34-38; 9:1.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* — MARK 8:34.

TIME. — Summer of A.D. 29; soon after the close of the last lesson.

PLACE. — In the villages of Cesarea Philippi, about thirty miles north-east of Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee. It was in the tetrarchy of Herod Philip, brother of Herod Antipas.

RULERS — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (16th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fourth year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (33d year); Herod Philip, of Iturea, etc., including Cesarea Philippi (33d year).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 16:24-28. Luke 9:23-27.

INTRODUCTION.

As the time for Jesus' departure from earth drew near, he impressed upon the minds of his disciples the great truths of his divinity and his atoning death (in our last lesson), and then corrected their notions as to the nature of his kingdom, and what they should expect as members of that kingdom. So that from this time his teachings assume a new character. While he shows them what it will cost to follow him, he also shows how much worse it will be *not* to follow him, and points out the future triumph and glories of his kingdom, of which they should be partakers. All this is still more deeply inwrought into their minds by the transfiguration which follows a week later.

34. ¶ And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, ¹Whosoever

And he called unto him the 34 multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any

¹ Matt. 10:38; 16:24. Luke 9:23; 14:27.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Taking up the Cross.** — Ver. 34. 34. And when he had called the people. What he had been speaking was to the disciples alone. Now he wants to instruct the people also, for all needed the lesson he would impart. It was necessary that the *disciples*

will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For 35.

should first know the mysteries of the kingdom, but the great practical truths belonged to all even then, for all could understand them; and thus he prepared them to receive the truths about his Messiahship which he had taught his disciples. With his disciples also. Special knowledge in no degree released them from the great practical duties he would enforce. He said unto them. Jesus would not entrap followers under false pretences. He tells them plainly the difficulties and trials they are sure to meet. He never tries to persuade men to follow him by merely telling them how happy they will be, how many and how delightful are the joys they will receive; but he always also shows them the thorns in the pathway, the enemies, the dangers, the difficulties, they must encounter.

Why? Because this is the sieve that sifts out false followers. It is the Ithuriel's spear, which tests whether they are disciples in deed and in truth, or only seekers after the loaves and fishes. One who follows Christ only in fair weather, for the sake of the pleasures he bestows, is not a disciple in heart, is not filled with the spirit of heaven, is not fit for heaven. His selfishness has merely taken another form. But he who will serve Christ, and do righteousness, because right and love demand it, though it lead through dens of lions, or martyr's fires, or Gethsemanes and Calvaries, he proves that he is in deed and in truth filled with the love of God, and the spirit of righteousness. — *P.* Whosoever will come. Will here is not a mere future, but a separate verb: whosoever wills, chooses, determines, to come. Will come after me. Will become my disciple. There was an eagerness among many of the people to "come after him." The wistfulness of a considerable proportion of the northern population had been awakened. They were ruminating anxiously on Old Testament predictions, and filled with vague expectancy. They saw that the rabbi of Nazareth was no common rabbi. He was a wonderful Being. It is not strange, therefore, that they pictured out to themselves all sorts of possibilities in connection with his career. — *Morrison.* Let him deny himself. The word is strong in the original, — *let him deny himself off, let him entirely renounce himself.* Let him be prepared to say "no" to many of the strongest cravings of his nature, in the direction more particularly of earthly ease, comfort, dignity, and glory. — *Morrison.* Our common thoughts of "self-denial," i. e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. — *Ellicott.* Self-denial for the sake of self-denial, as if our pains and troubles were a sweet incense to God, and he were the more pleased the more we suffer, is contrary to Christ's teaching and promises. St. Paul calls such self-denial a *doctrine of devils* (1 Tim. 4: 1-3), because it belies God's goodness, makes men self-righteous, and keeps them from the true self-denial which Christ requires. *What is the self-denial which Christ requires?* It is to deny ourselves every thing wrong, no matter how pleasant it may be; it is to do right, and serve Christ, and aid his kingdom, and help our fellow-men, at whatever cost, even though it be death. It is to make Christ first, and every thing else second. — *P.* Take up his cross. Luke adds, *daily*; not once, but all the time. The cross is the pain of the self-denial required in the preceding words. The cross is the symbol of doing our duty, even at the cost of the most painful death. Christ obeyed God, and carried out his work for the salvation of men, though it required him to die upon the cross in order to do it. And ever since, the cross has stood as the emblem, not of suffering, but of suffering for the sake of Christ and his gospel; as the highest ideal of obedience to God at any and every cost. — *P.* Observe, *his own cross*, not some other man's. Compare Heb. 12: 1, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Observe, too, on the one hand, that the Christian is not merely to bear the inevitable cross laid upon him, but to *take up* the cross voluntarily. The connection between this and the preceding verse is clear: Not only must you accept the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, if you are to be my disciple you must possess my spirit of willing self-sacrifice for love's sake. — *Abbott.* The point of duty for us, as for the Master, is not to seek the cross, but by the cross to seek the glory of the resurrection, which is found in no other path. The cross for the cross, never; but the cross for the Lord, always. — *A. Monod.* And follow me. To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe his doctrines, to uphold his cause, to obey his precepts, and to do it though it leads to heaven by the way of the cross. It is not merely to do right, but to do right for his sake, under his leadership, and according to his teaching. — *P.* "The Christian," says Luther, "is a Crucian." The Saviour pictures to his hearers a procession. He himself takes the lead with his cross. He is the chief Crucian. All his disciples follow. Each has his own particular cross. But the direction of the procession, when one looks far enough, is toward the kingdom of heavenly glory. — *Morrison.*

35. For ¹whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

whosoever would save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and

¹ John 12 : 25.

II. Gain and Loss. — Vers. 35-38. 35. **For.** Giving a reason why it was right and good for him to give the command in the previous verse, and it was wise for them to obey. **Whosoever will save his life ;** i.e., whosoever is determined to save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever is willing to lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, shall find it. In the original Greek, there is a difference between the first and second clause of this verse, as to the word *will*, which the English version does not preserve, but which the above translation may indicate to the English reader. All self-seeking is self-losing. Even in spiritual things, he who is perpetually studying how to secure joy and peace for himself loses it. A certain measure of self-forgetfulness is the condition of the highest success, even in Christian grace. — *Abbott.* **His life.** In the original this is the same word that is translated *soul* in vers. 36, 37 (see under ver. 36). It is much more than existence: life means one's self ; all that makes life worth living, — the character, the blessedness, which give life or the soul its value. So that the meaning is : Whosoever is determined to keep the pleasures and comforts of life, worldly blessings and rewards, as the great blessings of his life, at any cost, even of denying the Master, is sure to lose all that makes life worth living, — the happiness and the character which are eternal. — *P.* **Shall lose it.** He shall lose everlasting ease, comfort, honor, and glory, because he refuses to part, for Christ's sake, with the ease, comfort, honor, and glory which it is in the power of the world to withhold. — *Morison.* The same principle applies to many things ; for instance, the inordinate love of pleasure is equally fatal to happiness as to virtue. To the wise and virtuous, to those who use the pleasures of life only as a temporary relaxation, the hours of amusement bring real pleasure : to them the well of joy is ever full ; while to those who linger by its side, its waters are soon dried and exhausted. I speak not now of those bitter waters which must mingle themselves with the well of unhallowed pleasure. I speak only of the simple and natural effect of unwise indulgence ; that it renders the mind callous to enjoyment ; and that, even though the "fountain were full of water," the feverish lip is incapable of satiating its thirst. — *Alison.* **But whosoever shall lose his life.** In the sphere of the present. **For my sake, and the gospel's.** It is only loss for the sake of Christ that has this promise. Multitudes of people lose their lives for gain, for pleasure, for fashion. Each of these has more martyrs than the cross ever required ; but the loss was without compensation or hope. But whosoever loses for the love of Christ, for the sake of preaching and advancing the gospel, shall save it, — shall have a blessedness and glory which will a thousand times compensate for every loss. The loss was temporal, the gain is eternal ; the loss was small, the gain infinite ; the loss was of outward things, the gain is in the nature of the soul itself. — *P.*

36. **What shall it profit a man ?** Some have said that this regarding of *profit* and *reward* is only another form of selfishness. But selfishness is the seeking our own good at the expense or injury of others. To seek what is profitable is not selfishness, but wisdom. It is simply folly to throw away life, or pleasure, or wealth, for no good whatever. The wise man wants to know what good will come of it, to himself or others. Only a fool will have no regard to profit. — *P.* **If he shall gain the whole world.** All the pleasure, the wealth, the sources of enjoyment, the honors, the blessings, this world can give. But note this *if*. Very few that lose their souls gain the whole world, or but the smallest part thereof. Jeremy Taylor well suggests in his sermon, (1) that the greatest possessor of the world enjoys its best and noblest parts (food, light, prospects, harmonies of sound, books, thoughts) but in common with inferior persons. The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Cesar's gardens, had the same pleasures as they ministered to their lord. (2) Suppose a man, lord of all the world, yet, since every thing is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content or to the riches of our possession. Would he receive more, he must have new capacities created in him. (3) All the joys of the world summed up together are not enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a sorrow. (4) Though possessing all the world, his powers are limited : he cannot make his son to be obedient, or drive away disease. A multitude of dishes does not make him have a good stomach. (5) With the possession of the world come sorrow, anxiety, satiety, troubles of every sort. Yet for the hope of this men lose their souls. **His own soul.** *Soul* here is the same

37. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38. ¹Whosoever therefore ²shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

9:1. And he said unto them, ³Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the ⁴kingdom of God come with power.

forfeit his life? For what ³⁷ should a man give in exchange for his life? For who- ³⁸ soever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily ¹ I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand *by*, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.

¹ Matt. 10:33. Luke 9:26; 12:9. ² Rom. 1:16. ³ Tim. 1:8; 2:12. ⁴ Matt. 16:28. Luke 9:27.
⁵ Matt. 24:30; 25:31. Luke 22:18.

word that is translated *life* in the previous verse. It does not mean soul, in distinction from the body, but *life*, understanding it in the higher sense, life here and hereafter. — *Alford*. (See Revised Version.) Lose his own soul. The terms are chosen from the dialect of ordinary secular business. What will a man gain, on ordinary principles of value or exchange, if *he gain* the whole world, — i.e., all it can offer as an object of attraction or desire, the sum total of enjoyment, whether sensual, intellectual, or pecuniary, — and *lose* (be made to lose, be injured, ruined, with respect to) *his own soul*, or the word before translated “life,” but here denoting rather that which lives, enjoys, suffers? What are enjoyments if there is no one to enjoy them, if the man himself is lost, i.e., lost to happiness forever? — *Alexander*. (1) Every man has a soul of his own. (2) It is possible for the soul to be lost, and there is danger of it. (3) If the soul is lost, it is the sinner’s own losing, and his blood is on his own head. (4) One soul is of more worth than all the world; so the winning of the world is often the losing of the soul. (5) The loss of the soul cannot be made up by the gain of the whole world. (6) If the soul be once lost, it is lost forever, and the loss can never be repaired or retrieved. — *M. Henry*.

37. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What would a man not give? If he had the whole world, would he not willingly give it, provided he really knew, believed, or felt, that otherwise he would be utterly lost? The Saviour has gone forward in thought, and taken his standpoint in eternity. It is from that standpoint that he puts his question. It is implied that the time will come, in the experience of the persistently infatuated, when kingdom upon kingdom — were they available — would be an insufficient exchange for the soul. — *Morison*. This bad bargain is ever made silently, half unconsciously, gradually. Few deliberately sell their souls; but whoever does wrong for any pleasure, drinks, dissipates, is dishonest, is worldly-minded, neglects religion, is selfish, and turns a deaf ear to the cry of the poor, really sells his soul. — *P.*

38. Whosoever therefore. What follows is a justification, as it were, of the preceding queries. Notwithstanding the appalling nature of some of the ideas suggested by them, it was right to propose them. Whosoever. It matters not what his position or condition in this world may be. Shall be ashamed of me and of my words. As many would be prone to be. The temptation to *shame*, in reference to the Saviour and the Saviour’s sayings or doctrines, continues to the present day, and is pervading society to the core, even in countries called Christian. It is one of the severest temptations which young “converts” have to encounter. The anticipation of it is one of the mightiest motives to keep men away from conversion, and on the other side of Christian faith and fealty. This adulterous and sinful generation. Adulterous here, as in the Old Testament, means unfaithful to God. — *Schaff*. The wickedness of the people among whom the disciples lived, a people who would reproach and sneer, and hate those who set up to be better than they, would make it much harder to confess Christ among them. — *P.* Of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed. Because such were not worthy of their Master. At the day of judgment he must reveal the simple truth that these had not the spirit of their Lord, their deeds were not like his: they failed in faith and patience and love and duty, they do not belong in his company. — *P.* When he cometh in the glory of his Father. The day of judgment, when Christ shall be exalted above all principalities and powers, and all men shall be brought before him to be judged according to their deeds. Christ now seemed but a poor humble man; but he looks forward, and bids them look forward, to the time when all this shall be changed, and he shall take his place in his kingdom.

III. The Triumph of Christ’s Kingdom. — Chap. 9, ver. 1. 1. Some that stand here. As he said also in his great prophecy of Matt. 24 (see ver. 34). Shall not

taste of death. Death is regarded as a bitter poison-potion, which all have, at one time or another, to taste. — *Morison*. Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power; or, literally, *in power*, in the possession and manifestation of power. The kingdom of God, as developed on the earth, might appear to be a feeble little thing as it pre-existed during the period of our Lord's humiliation; but by and by it would assert for itself a might that would defy every species of criticism or opposition, and eventually shiver into atoms, or grind into powder, every existing institution of ungodliness. — *Morison*. The essential meaning is, that, before all then present should be dead, there would be some convincing proof that the Messiah's kingdom had been actually set up, as predicted by the prophets and by Christ himself. It has reference to a gradual or progressive change, the institution of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men and in society at large, of which protracted process the two salient points are the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem more than a quarter of a century later; between which points, as those of its inception and consummation, lies the lingering death of the Mosaic dispensation, and the gradual erection of Messiah's kingdom. — *Alexander*. Three of them were immediately to see him transfigured; all but one were to be witnesses of his resurrection; one at least — the beloved disciple — was to survive that capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple. — *Farrar*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Sermons by Wesley, "The Important Question;" Saurin, "The Worth of a Soul;" Jeremy Taylor, "The Foolish Exchange." Mark Hopkins's *Sermons*, "Self-Denial," ver. 24; "Life," ver. 25. Dr. Huntingdon's sermon on "The Cross a Burden or a Glory," in *Christian Believing and Living*. On taking up the cross and following Christ, see *The Cross-Bearer*, with its twelve illustrations; *The City of No Cross*; the poem *The Changed Cross*; Bowes's *Illustrative Gatherings*, second series, p. 70, "Cross-bearing;" *Biblical Treasury*, vol. vii., § 1,383, "How a Cross ceases to be a Cross;" *Gotthold's Emblems*, p. 307, "The Christian without a Cross." On the exchange for the soul, see *Gotthold's Emblems*, pp. 238-240, "The Cipher," and "The Number before it," on the value of the world with and without religion; p. 166, "The Soul-Venders;" Bowes's *Illustrative Gatherings*, second series, p. 358, "A Soul for an Estate;" p. 450, "The Dying Words of Severus;" Spencer's *Things New and Old*, p. 453, § 1,598, "The Value of the Soul;" *Biblical Treasury*, vol. ix., § 1,821, "A Life for a Flower;" *For My Sake and the Gospel's*, see Edward Everett Hale's little book, *In His Name*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Bearing the cross. In *The Cross-Bearer*, a little book published by the American Tract Society, is a series of illustrations from French pictures, showing the right and the wrong ways of bearing the cross. One picture represents the disciple as sawing off a part of his cross. He would bear the cross, but the one Christ gave him is too heavy. Another is dragging his cross behind him with a cord, being ashamed of it. Another is worshipping his cross, crowning it with flowers, instead of bearing it; praising religion, but not practising it. At last one comes with his Master before him, bearing his cross, while the disciple walks in the Master's footsteps, and carries his cross exactly as his Master does. — *P*.

II. The exchange for the soul. The old rabbins, those poets of religion, report of Moses, that when the courtiers of Pharaoh were sporting with the child Moses, in the chamber of Pharaoh's daughter, they presented to his choice an ingot of gold in one hand, and a coal of fire in the other; and that the child snatched at the coal, thrust it in his mouth, and so singed and parched his tongue that he stammered ever after. And certainly it is infinitely more childlike in us, for the glittering of the small glow-worms and the charcoal of worldly possessions, to swallow the flames of hell greedily in our choice. — *Bishop Jeremy Taylor*.

III. There was an advertisement, in one of the daily papers, to this effect: "Wanted, a nice cottage and grounds in exchange for a lot of choice liquors." Multitudes of drinking men have made such an exchange. Not only property, but happiness, home, the welfare of friends, character, prospects, every thing, have they exchanged for intoxicating liquors. So men sell their characters and clear conscience for money, for honors, for pleasures. They sell their souls for the world, and find that they have sold themselves for naught; as Esau for a mess of pottage, and Judas for thirty pieces of silver.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 34. Christ sets before those who would become his disciples the difficulties and trials, as well as the joys and prospects, of his service.
2. This is a sieve to sift out the false disciples, and a test of true disciples.
3. We are to renounce the world as *master*, but to use it as *servant*. Like fire, the world is a good servant, but a terrible master.
4. The first lesson in Christ's school is self-denial. — *Henry*.
5. Every one has a cross to bear, and that which Christ gives to each is the best one for him.
6. But, like Christ's, our cross may become a glory, and lead to a crown.
7. Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore. It is such a burden as wings to a bird, or sails to a ship. — *Rutherford*.
8. Vers. 35-37. No man ever really gained any thing by doing wrong.
9. It is wonderful for how small a price men will exchange their souls.
10. Ver. 38. Christ and his religion are in direct opposition to a wicked world.
11. As the world is in the majority, and sets the fashion, and scorns those who differ, the disciple will be tempted to be ashamed of his life and principles.
12. He can overcome this temptation by looking to that home and that time when his principles shall prevail.
13. The triumph of Christ and his kingdom is certain.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson brings out vividly the truth that **THE WAY OF THE CROSS IS THE WAY TO HEAVEN**. Christ, at the outset, shows men the trials as well as the joys of the way. (1) *We learn what it is to take up the cross*, ver. 34. (2) *We learn The Reasons for taking up the Cross*, for otherwise we make a most *foolish exchange*, the worst of all bargains, vers. 35-37. (3) *Lest in this wicked world we should be tempted to be ashamed of Christ*, he warns us against the consequences of such folly, ver. 38. And (4) *he sustained and strengthened his disciples by a glimpse of his own future glory, and the certain and early triumph of his kingdom*, ver. 38, chap. 9:1.

LESSON X. — JUNE 4.

THE TRANSFIGURATION. — MARK 9:2-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* — **MATT. 3:17.**

TIME. — Summer of A. D. 29; a week after the last lesson. That the transfiguration took place at night may be fairly inferred from Luke's statement (Luke 9:37), that they came down "the next day." Observe, too, the sleepiness of the apostles; and that night was often our Lord's time for prayer.

PLACE. — Probably Mount Hermon, in the vicinity of Cesarea Philippi. The traditional site is Mount Tabor, south-west of the Sea of Galilee; but there are several reasons why Mount Hermon is the more probable place.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (4th year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (33d year); Herod Philip, of Iturea and the north-west regions, including Cesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — **Matt. 17:1-13.** **Luke 9:28-36.**

INTRODUCTION.

In the last two lessons Christ gave his disciples glimpses of his sufferings and death, and of the glory that was to follow. His death was only a few months in the future. The disciples needed to be prepared for it, so that their faith fail not in the hour of trial. So God gives to them a vision of the real nature and power and glory of the Lord they were following. Their belief in his divinity, in his greatness, in his being the Son of God, no longer depended on his word alone; but the truth was shown to the disciples in clear, unimpeachable manifestations. They believed before; now they knew. — *P.* If the preceding lesson insisted on "Christ's cross before Christ's crown," this one gives the sure evidence

2. ¶ ¹ And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

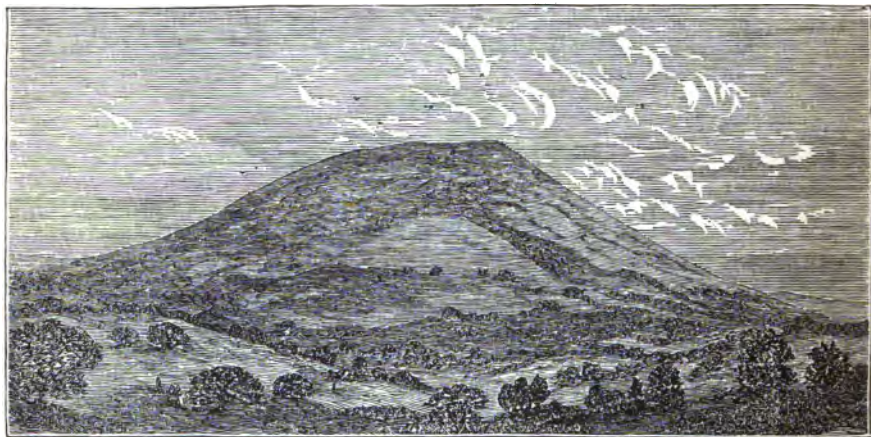
And after six days Jesus ² taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them:

¹ Matt. 17: 1. Luke 9: 28.

of the crown to follow the cross. — *Stock*. But the primary purpose probably was to give to our Lord at this crisis consolation from his Father, who, by an attesting voice, ushered in the sufferings as he had done the successes. — *Schaff*.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Transfiguration.** — Vers. 2-8. 2. 'And after six days. Six days after the conversation recorded in our last lesson. Luke says, "*about an eight days.*" *About*, not exactly. Luke's *eight* days include the fractional days at the beginning and end of the day of the conversation and the day of the transfiguration. Mark's *six* days are the six complete days intervening between them. **Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John.** The *élite* of the Master's elect; the triumvirs of the apostolate. They were sufficient in number to be adequate witnesses to the rest of the apostles, and to men in general. — *Morison*. The sons of thunder and the man of rock. — *Farrar*. The flower and crown of the apostolic band, Peter, who loved him so much; John, whom he loved so much; and James, who should first attest that death could as little as life separate from his love. The same three who should hereafter be witnesses of his humiliation in the agony of the garden, and who, therefore, were thus fitly fore-armed by that which they now beheld against what they should then behold. — *Trench's Studies in the Gospels*. **Leadeth them up.** At



TRADITIONAL MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

the evening hour. — *Farrar*. **Into a high mountain.** That is, *into* some recess in some high mountain. The particular mountain referred to is not specified, and not known. — *Morison*. There can be little doubt that Mount Hermon (*Jebel es Sheikh*) is intended, in spite of the persistent, but perfectly baseless, tradition which points to Tabor. For (1) Mount Hermon is easily within six days' reach of Cesarea Philippi, and (2) could alone be called a "lofty mountain" (being 10,000 feet high), or "the mountain," when the last scene had been at Cesarea. Further, (3) Tabor at that time in all probability was (Jos. B. 7. 1, 8, § 7, *Vit.* 37), as from time immemorial it had been (Josh. 19: 12), an inhabited and fortified place, wholly unsuited for a scene so solemn; and (4) was moreover in Galilee, which is excluded by Mark (9: 30). "The mountain" is indeed the meaning of the name "Hermon," which, being already consecrated by Hebrew poetry (Ps. 133: 3, and under its old names of Sion and Sirion, or "breast-plate," Deut. 4: 48; 3: 9; Cant. 4: 8), was well suited for the transfiguration by its height, seclusion, and snowy splendor. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding¹ white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

And his garments became³ glistering, exceeding white; so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. And there ap-⁴peared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking

¹ Dan. 7:9. Matt. 28:3.

Apart. Literally, *apart alone*. Away from the other disciples and the multitudes. *He went up to pray*, says Luke. Luke gives us to understand that he simply wished to pray with them. Lange thinks that it is probable, that, in consequence of the announcement of his approaching sufferings, deep depression had taken possession of the hearts of the twelve. They had spent these six days, respecting which the sacred records preserve unbroken silence, in a gloomy stupor. Jesus was anxious to rouse them out of this feeling; and, in order to do this, he had recourse to prayer. *The glorification of Jesus was an answer to prayer, and the means employed by God to bring about the desired result.* The connection between the prayer of Jesus and his transfiguration is expressed in Luke by the preposition *ἐν* (in, by means of, his praying), which denotes more than simultaneousness (whilst he prayed), and makes his prayer the cause of this mysterious event. — *Godet*. And he was transfigured before them. It is impossible, on any fair interpretation of the narrative, to regard the transfiguration otherwise than as a real and a supernatural occurrence. — *Cook*. Transfigured; literally, transformed, metamorphosed, changed in form. It was a change in the externality of the person; a kind of temporary glorification effected, no doubt, from within outward, rather than from without inward. — *Morison*. The infinite fullness of the Spirit was poured out over his whole being: the heavenly glory of his nature, which was still concealed under his earthly appearance, now broke forth. — *Lange's Leben Jesu*. The fashion of his countenance was altered (Luke), by being lighted with radiance both from without and from within. — *Alford*. Transcendent as the manifestation was, it has its lower analogies in the radiance which made the face of Stephen "as the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15); yet more in the glory which shone on the face of Moses when he came down from the mount (Exod. 34:29); in some faint measure, in what may be called the metamorphic power of prayer, which invests features that have no form or comeliness with the rapture of devout ecstasy. — *Ellicott*. The face of Moses had shone, but as the moon, with a borrowed, reflected light; but Christ's shone as the sun, with an innate, inherent light, which was the more sensibly glorious because it suddenly broke out, as it were, from behind a black cloud. — *Matthew Henry*. Before them. Observe that it took place *before them*; i.e., the disciples, not during their sleep. They saw, not only Christ after he was transfigured, but also the process of the change, as it came over him. It is true, Luke's account, in our English version, implies that they were asleep, and were wakened out of it to behold the glory (Luke 9:32). But the original does not justify this interpretation. — *Abbott*. The phrase in Luke, "when they were awake," means in the original, *yet having remained awake*. — *Schaff*.

3. And his raiment [plural, *his garments*] became shining. Or *resplendent*. Plato applies the word to lightning; Aristotle, to the light of the fixed stars. The garments could not conceal the personal glory, but became themselves semi-translucent. — *Morison*. Matthew says, *white as the light*, and, *His face did shine as the sun*. **Exceeding white as snow.** Or dazzlingly white, like the glow of white objects when reflecting the rays of a meridian sun. — *Morison*. The comparison may have been suggested by the snow of Hermon, which might be visible with its brilliant shimmer in the bright starlight, even without a moon. In all that country the air is of wondrous transparency and clearness: the stars and the moon shine as they are never seen here; and in the moonlight the writer has often seen the distant mountains, snow and all, with almost as much distinctness as in full day. Even the colors are brought out by the moon. Then, too, the snowy mountain-tops are lit up after sunset with a real Alpine glow. — *Prof. Isaac H. Hall in Sunday School Times*. So (i.e., so resplendently white) as no fuller on earth can white them. The fuller's trade consisted in cleansing linen garments, and, by means of what was called "fuller's earth," giving them a peculiar whiteness. The trade is alluded to in 2 Kings 18:17; Isa. 7:3; Mal. 3:2.

St. Mark borrows one image from the world of nature, another from that of man's art and device. By these he struggles to set forth and reproduce for his readers the transcendent brightness of that light which now arrayed, and from head to foot, the person of the Lord. — *Trench's Studies in the Gospels*.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias (Greek for *Elijah*) with Moses. Elijah with Moses was visible to them. — *Morison*. (1) Among all the prophets and saints of the

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

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Old Testament these were the two, of whom one had not died (2 Kings 2:11), and the other had no sooner tasted of death than his body was withdrawn from under the dominion of death and of him that had the power of death (Deut. 34:6; Jude 9). Both therefore came from the grave, but from the grave conquered. (2) Again, these two were the acknowledged heads and representatives, the one of the law, the other of the prophets (compare Matt. 7:12). — *Cambridge Bible*. We may also think of them as representative men in their heavenly relationships, — a sort of delegation from the goodly company of patriarchs and saints gathered to their upper home. — *Cowles*. Both, like the greater One with whom they spoke, had endured that supernatural fast of forty days and nights; both had been on the holy mount in the visions of God. — *Alford*. This must have greatly confirmed the disciples in the belief of a *future state*, and in the doctrine of the *resurrection*. — *A. Clarke*. And they were talking with Jesus. The subject of their conversation is given in Luke (9:31). It was of *the decease* (exodus, departure, referring to his death and ascension) *which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*. This was the great event of the world's history; this was the real founding of the kingdom of God; this was the culmination of the salvation brought by the Messiah; this was the great act to which all the sacrifices appointed by Moses looked forward, and which gave them meaning and value. It was the beginning and source of the world-wide development of the kingdom of God which he had instituted. It was the highest act, the completion of the earthly life of the Messiah, of whom the *prophets* had prophesied, and the introduction of those glorious times which they had foretold. — *P*.

These three, thus glorified together, show that in the pure light of truth, in the purposes of heaven, all these, the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, are parts of one whole, and agree in one. Whatever the seeming differences and contradictions, there is in reality only harmony among them, — the different parts of one great anthem, which is filling the earth with the music of heaven. So it is, in our transfiguration experiences with Christ, that the difficulties of the great doctrines of grace vanish, and all become harmonious; and Christians who rejoice in these lofty experiences together, though of many different denominations, yet become one in Christ Jesus. *Here alone* can be found the true unity of the Church; as "it has been said, whether by poetry or science it matters not, there is a certain point in the upper air in which all discordant sounds of the earth, the rattle of wheels, the chime of bells, the roll of the drum, the laugh of the child, the moan of the beggar, meet and blend in perfect harmony." (*Dr. William Adams.*) — *P*.

5. And Peter answered. Eager, ardent, impulsive Peter was the first to speak. He answered not to a question spoken, but to the act of Jesus in making this revelation, and to the movements toward departure of Moses and Elijah. The words were spoken as they departed (Luke 9:33). Master (Rabbi), it is good for us to be here. It is too brief a converse, too transient a glimpse and foretaste of the heavenly glory. He will fain detain these august visitors. They shall remain there, and make it a constant paradise; and there, rather than on Moriah, the temple mount, shall be the divine presence. — *Whedon*. Peter, though he had but a glimpse of glory, yet he saith, "It is good to be here." But, oh! how infinitely good will it be to be in heaven! How shall we then be rapt up with glory when we shall be forever with the Lord! — *Archbishop Usher*. Let us make three tabernacles. Three booths of wattled boughs, like those of the Feast of Tabernacles. It seemed to him that the hour for the long-looked-for reign had come. From the slopes of Hermon he would have had the laws of the new kingdom proclaimed, so that all men might recognize the true Messiah attended by the representatives of the old dispensation. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. So men still often desire to remain amid the ecstasies of religious feeling, in the radiance of "the gates ajar." But there is something better for them in coming down from the mount to their daily duties and cares. The blessed transfiguration experiences are to fit them for the burdens and duties of daily life. — *P*.

6. For he wist not (knew not) what to say, for they were sore (exceedingly) afraid (agitated). In other words, his was not a well-considered proposition to retain the spirits in earthly tabernacles, but an ardent expression inspired by awe and spiritual ecstasy commingled. — *Abbott*. Sore is from the same Saxon root with *sorry*, and has in old writers the sense of heavy, harsh, severe. — "*Pamela*" in *Golden Rule*.

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them : and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9. ¹ And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

sore afraid. And there came ⁷ a cloud overshadowing them : and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved son : hear ye him. And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

And as they were coming ⁹ down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead. And to they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean. And ¹¹

¹ Matt. 17 : 9.

7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them. Matthew says, *A bright cloud*. The language of the English version in Luke would leave the impression that all, including the disciples, entered this cloud ; but such is not the significance of the original (see Luke 9 : 34). Christ, Moses, and Elijah are alone represented as entering into the cloud, which separated them from the disciples' sight ; and out of this cloud the voice spake to the disciples. By the disciples such a luminous cloud would be instantly accepted as a symbol of the divine presence. A bright cloud, the Shechinah, is throughout the Old Testament dispensation employed as a symbol of God's presence, being very generally entitled "the glory," or "the glory of the Lord." It has been suggested that this cloud was emblematic of the Third Person of the ever blessed Trinity. — *T. Ford*. So that all three persons were appropriately manifested ; the voice coming from the Father to his transfigured Son. A voice came, This is my beloved son. The same voice which had once before been heard at the baptism, and which should salute him again as he stood on the threshold of his passion ; thus at the beginning, at the middle, and at the close of his ministry. — *Trench*. Such a confirmation of the great confession of Peter was never to be forgotten. Almost a generation later, when he wrote his second epistle, the remembrance of this night was as vivid as ever. "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory." — *Geikie*. Hear him. The voice would be finely sustaining to the heart of our Lord himself, and, as heard by the disciples, would be eminently fitted to strengthen their faith, and predispose them to bow implicitly to the Master's instructions and declarations. — *Morison*.

8. And suddenly. (1) At first, at the sound of the divine voice, they fell prostrate on their faces (Matt. 17 : 6). (2) Then Jesus came to them, and calmed their fears. (3) All at once it became apparent to them that Moses and Elijah had departed. "The suddenly" is used to describe the impression made upon them after they had looked around." Save Jesus only. It was a relief to see "Jesus only" with them, as they had been wont to see him. — *Ellicott*. The moment had now arrived when the Lord required no further testimony from Moses or Elijah in the presence of his disciples. Hitherto the Old Testament had been their warrant and evidence for the New ; but now the new covenant was not only self-evidenced, but serving as confirmation of the Old. — *Lange*.

II. Conversation on the Coming of Elijah. — Vers. 9-13. 9. As they came down. We must come down from the mountains, not of holy and pure living, but of ecstatic experiences, of special spiritual exercises and joys. But, blessed be God, there is a mountain of glory and joy before us whence we shall never come down. — *Matthew Henry*. He charged them (as they were descending the mountain) that they should tell no man . . . till. Even they themselves did not yet understand what they had seen. Still less could they, in present circumstances, make others understand. — *Morison*. Had they preached the Messiah now, they would hardly have held him forth as a dying Redeemer ; and had they preached him as a glorious Messiah, superior to Moses and Elias, as set forth in his transfiguration, the Jewish authorities would have held them guilty of treason. — *Whedon*.

10. And they kept that saying ; i.e., they obeyed his injunction not to tell what they had seen. They were not to reveal him even, to the other disciples. Questioning what the rising from the dead should mean. This does not refer to the resurrection generally, — for it was an article of Jewish belief, and connected with the times of the Messiah, — but to his resurrection as connected with his death. The whole was enigmatical to them. —

11. ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that ¹Elias must first come?

12. And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and ²how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and ³be set at nought.

13. But I say unto you, That ⁴Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

they asked him, saying, The scribes say that Elijah must first come. And he said unto ¹² them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto ¹³ you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they listed, even as it is written of him.

¹ Mal 4:5. Matt. 17:10. ² Ps. 22:6. Isa. 53:2, etc. Dan. 9:26. ³ Luke 23:11. Phil. 2:7. ⁴ Matt. 11:14; 17:12. Luke 1:17.

Alford. This is one of the many indications in the New Testament that they did not understand, or at least did not accept, his prophecies of his death, nor comprehend his prophecies of his resurrection. — *Abbott.*

11. They asked him, saying, Why say the scribes . . . Elias must first come? They knew that the scribes, in their capacity as interpreters of prophecy, were wont to say that Elijah must first come before their nation's Messiah could appear. They said this on the strength of Mal. 3:1, and 4:5. But these disciples would say to their Master, Thou art our Messiah already come, and yet no Elijah has appeared. — *Cowles.* They also may have questioned how Elijah could have come if he were now in heaven. — *P.*

12. Elias verily cometh first; i.e., the fact which the scribes assert is true. It is so prophesied, and it so takes place. Restoreth all things. Works a reformation; brings back the true basis and principles and life of the kingdom of God, which the Jews had perverted and turned aside. He began the reform of all things pertaining to the kingdom of God. — *P.* According to the prediction in Mal. 4:5, 6. The use of the present tense points to a deeper truth. The Elijah ministry, the work of the preacher of repentance, is not a transient phenomenon belonging to one stage only of the Church's history, but was to be, throughout the ages, on to the end of all things, the indispensable preparation for the coming of the Lord. Only through it could all things be restored, and the path made ready for the heralds of forgiveness and of peace. — *Ellicott.* And how it is written of the Son of man. The Saviour wished the disciples to couple, with the fact concerning Elijah, another fact concerning the Messiah himself. It was a fact of the greatest moment, though utterly ignored by the Pharisees. The Saviour answers his own question as follows: That he should suffer many things, and be set at nought. To lose sight of the sufferings of the Messiah, and of his rejection by the mass of the people, was to lose sight of one of the most obvious and important features of Old Testament prophecy. The word aptly rendered *set at nought* is exceedingly graphic and emphatic. Our Saviour was to be treated out and out as if he were nothing at all. He was not only to be ignored, but ignored with the utmost possible contempt. — *Morison.* That the scribes did not recognize and accept John the Baptist as Elijah was no proof that Elijah had not come; neither would it any more be proof that Jesus was not the Messiah because the scribes set him at nought. — *P.*

13. Elias (Elijah) is indeed come. John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matt. 17:13; 11:14; Luke 1:17). Have done unto him whatsoever they listed. *List* and *lust* were originally one word, meaning to *desire* or *wish*. — *Morison.* The account of his martyrdom is given in Matt. 14:6-12; Mark 6:21-29. The murder was perpetrated by Herod. Here it is imputed to the scribes and Pharisees, because their influence was adverse to John, and perhaps because, if they had recognized and received him, Herod, who feared the people, would have feared to perpetrate the murder. — *Abbott.* As it is written of him; i.e., Elijah has come, as it was written or predicted of him. Grotius suggests that the actual treatment of Elijah by Ahab and Jezebel, and the people of those days, as written in the Old Testament, was a virtual prediction of what should be done to John by Herod and Herodias, and the people of his time.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Dr. Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 609, gives a glowing account of the view from the top of Hermon. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, and Thomson's *Land and Book*, vol. i. p. 348, for location of the transfiguration. The passage is beautifully expounded by Archbishop Trench in his *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 184. Dr. Hanna's chapter upon it (*Life of Christ*) is an excellent one. In Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, there are two most quaint sermons on the transfiguration, preached before James I. Ruskin's *Fronde Agrestes*, pp. 133-137.

speaks of it in his own vivid style. See also William M. Taylor's *Elijah*, "Elijah on the Mount." Spurgeon's *Sermons*, vol. ix., "Jesus Only."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **Christ's glory.** Hawthorne compares Christianity to a grand cathedral with divinely pictured windows. Viewed from without, it is impossible to gain the slightest conception of the beautiful forms and radiant colors manifest to those who look at them from within. So it is with Christ. There is a glory in him not visible to those without, but revealed to those who dwell in his heart of hearts. — *P.*

II. **The lighted cross.** The same truth may be illustrated by the glass cross upon the spire of a church near New York City, within which are placed gas pipes and jets. When unlighted, it is but a dark cross against the night skies; but, when lighted, it glows with an exquisite beauty, and hints at the true glory of Christ and his cross. — *P.*

III. **Our future glory.** There are people, it is said, who were born in the mines of Siberia, and have grown into manhood, and yet have never been taken up into the outer world. They can judge of the glories of fields and forests, only by the mosses and the angular forms of their mines. They know of the sun only from candles; of flowers only from shining stones. If they were to have one glimpse of a bright morning landscape, it would be to them as this transfiguration scene to the disciples. As much more glorious will be our future life than this world, as this upper world is more glorious than the depths of a Siberian mine. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Christ crucified is the centre of this world's history, of religious truth, and of salvation, — the Alcyone, around which all the stars of the moral heavens revolve.

2. There is a glory in the Bible and in Christ beyond our ordinary conception, and often veiled, but always there to those who can see.

3. There are heavenly experiences given occasionally to Christians as a foretaste of their future glory, and a glimpse of the spiritual realities ever about them.

4. Ver. 1. Only those who have served Christ faithfully in the valleys of daily duty, and have lived near to him, can climb with him the Mount of Transfiguration.

5. Our richest and most heavenly experiences come in and through prayer.

6. Ver. 4. Christians are nearest together in doctrine when nearest to Christ in heavenly experience. The best and highest Christians differ least in essentials.

7. Ver. 5. Love will stammer rather than be dumb. — *Archbishop Leighton.*

8. Ver. 7. Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. God bears witness to him.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In this lesson we have revealed to us THE GLORIOUS NATURE OF OUR SAVIOUR. After a clear setting forth of the circumstances, we see (1) to whom this glory is revealed (ver. 2), even to the faithful three. (2) It was revealed in prayer and in answer to prayer (Luke 9: 28). (3) We look at the glory of Christ (ver. 3); comparing this verse with the description in Matt. and Luke, in Dan. 7: 9, and Rev. 1: 13-16. Such is our Saviour; such we also shall be (Phil. 3: 21). (4) Christ's glory is confirmed (vers. 4-8) by the Law, by the Prophets, by the voice of God. (5) The scene closes with questionings and explanations, in which Christ shows the true fulfilment of prophecy. (6) What good came from the transfiguration. Another plan of this lesson is given in Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel*. SUBJECT: THE VISIONS AND VOICES OF CHRISTIANITY. I. *The visions of Christianity.* (1) The vision of Christ; (2) the vision of departed saints; (3) the vision of divine glory. II. *The voices of Christianity.* (1) The voice of social converse; (2) the voice of divine affection; (3) the voice of imperative duty, — *Hear him.* — *Genius of the Gospel*, p. 329.

LESSON XI. — JUNE 11.

THE AFFLICTED CHILD. — MARK 9: 14-32.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *All things are possible to him that believeth.* — MARK 9: 23.

TIME. — Summer, A. D. 29. The next morning after the transfiguration.

PLACE. — The region of Cesarea Philippi. Probably in some of the villages near Mount Hermon.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 17: 14-23. Luke 9: 37-45.

14. ¶ ¹ And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17. And ² one of the multitude answered and said,

And when they came to ¹⁴ the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the mul- ¹⁵ titude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And ¹⁶ he asked them, What question ye with them? And one of ¹⁷ the multitude answered him,

¹ Matt. 17: 14. Luke 9: 37. ² Matt. 17: 14. Luke 9: 38.

INTRODUCTION.

After the transfiguration, Jesus descended the mountain the next morning with his three disciples, conversing on the way. When they reached the village at the base, where the other disciples had remained, they found a scene in strange contrast with the heavenly peace and glory of the night before, between "the open heaven and the sons of glory on the mount, and the valley of tears, with its terrible forms of misery and pain and unbelief." — *Stier*. And which plainly showed that they should not remain in those ecstatic and delightful experiences, but they should bring down to this suffering and sinful world the increase of faith and power and joy they had gained on the Mount of Transfiguration.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Lunatic Boy;—failure of the Disciples to heal him.—Vers. 14-18.

14. And when he came to his disciples. The nine he had left in some village at the base of the mountain. A great multitude. The Jewish population scattered round Cesarea Philippi had already heard of his arrival in their parts, and from various motives had gathered to see and hear him. Hence no sooner was he noticed descending the slopes than they moved in his direction to meet him.—*Geikie*. They were attracted together partly by the outcries and strange actions of the lunatic child, and the vain endeavors of the disciples to cure him. And the scribes questioning (disputing) with them. On account of their failure to heal the lunatic boy. The disciples themselves did not understand their failure (ver. 28). The scribes and Pharisees are exultant at their non-success. With their wonted uncharitableness and hate they seize, perhaps, the failure as another opportunity to denounce them and their Master as impostors, and to turn upon them the contempt of the multitude.—*Dr. Thomas*.

15. And straightway (immediately) all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed. (1) His face would seem, like that of Moses (Exod. 34: 30), to have retained traces of the celestial glory of the holy mount, which had not faded into the light of common day, and filled the beholders with awe and wonder.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*. They were affected by his glory, though they did not know what had been done on the mount.—*Bengel*. (2) The Lord's opportune appearance seems to have struck the people with amazement. The disciples had got into a great difficulty. They had failed in an attempt to effect a cure. Their failure had been signal and conspicuous. The scribes—everlying in wait to detect flaws—had taken advantage of their discomfiture to ride rough-shod over their humiliated feelings; and no doubt they would be improving the opportunity to throw discredit on the name of the Master himself.—*Morison*. Saluted him. As taken with the gleams of brightness that played round him still.—*Trench*. Hailed his advent with respectfulness and delight.—*Morison*.

16. And he asked the scribes. As when some great captain suddenly arriving upon a field of battle, where his subordinate lieutenants have well-nigh lost the day, and brought all into a hopeless confusion, with his eye measures at once the necessities of the moment, and with no more than his presence causes the tide of victory to turn, and every thing to right itself again, so was it now. The Lord arrests the advancing and victorious foe: he addresses himself to the scribes, and saying, "What question ye with them?" takes the baffled and hard-pressed disciples under his own protection, implying by his words, "If you have any question, henceforth it must be with me."—*Trench*.

17. And one of the multitude. It was one from among the multitude, the father of the suffering child, which was his only one, who took up the word, and, kneeling down before Jesus, declared all his own misery and his son's.—*Trench*. For, though the scribes had been bold enough before the simple disciples, they were silent in the commanding

Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit ;

18. And whosoever he taketh him, he teareth him ; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away : and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out ; and they could not.

19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ? bring him unto me.

20. And they brought him unto him : and ¹ when

Master, I brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit ; and whosoever it 18 taketh him, it dasheth him down : and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away : and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out ; and they were not able. And he answereth them 19 and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I bear with you ? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto 20 him : and when he saw him,

¹ Chap. 1 : 26. Luke 9 : 42.

presence of their Master. — *Geikie*. The scribes feared to repeat their objections, lest our Lord should convict them in the presence of the multitude by working a miraculous cure. The hostility to our Lord was always cowardly ! — *Schaff*. Brought unto thee. It was to thee that I wished and intended to apply, though when I arrived I found thee not. — *Morison*. My son. His only son (Luke 9 : 38). Which hath a dumb spirit. He was also deaf (ver. 25). He could utter a cry (Luke 9 : 39), but he could not use articulate speech. Which hath a dumb spirit is, according to a common idiom, *who has a spirit that makes him dumb*. The poor lad was a demoniac, and the demon had deprived him of the use of the organs of speech and hearing. — *Morison*. On demoniac possessions, see Lesson XI. of First Quarter.

18. Whosoever he taketh him. When the spirit took him in its might, then in these paroxysms of his disorder it tare him till he foamed and gnashed with his teeth ; and altogether he pined away like one the very springs of whose life were dried up. And, while these accesses of his disorder might come upon him at any moment and in any place, they often exposed the unhappy sufferer to the worst accidents : “ *Oftimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water* ” (Matt. 17 : 15). — *Trench*. Teareth him. New Version : Dasheth him down. Something seems to be *tearing*, or *tearing at him*. Gnasheth. Grindeth his teeth. Pineth away. Continues this *till his strength is exhausted*. — *Morison*. And in Luke (9 : 39), “hardly departs from him, bruising him.” The three descriptions taken together form a fearful picture of the frenzied paroxysms which were added to his habitual dumbness. — *Bible Union Notes*. The fits were sudden, but the dumbness seems to have been continuous. — *Schaff*. I spake to thy disciples. The nine whom he found, while the other three were on the mount. They could not. An emphatic expression : *they were not strong enough* to cast him out. — *Bible Union Notes*. They tried to cast him out. They expected to do it, for they had done it before. Now they bid the demon come out ; and, for answer, the demon rent and tormented the boy before their eyes. Again they command ; and they might as well have talked to a whirlwind, or bid the Jordan stop flowing : the only answer was the boy thrown upon the ground, wallowing and foaming.

II. The Lunatic Boy ; — cured by Jesus. — Vers. 19-27. 19. He answereth him (*them*) and saith. In the hearing of all. Oh faithless (unbelieving) generation. Luke adds, *and perverse*, — perverted, turned aside from the truth. Not merely the disciples (*Meyer*), nor the scribes (*Calvin*), nor the father (*Chrysostom*), nor the people (*Olshausen*). The expression *generation*, the contemporary race, is sufficiently wide to comprehend all the persons present. After enjoying fellowship with celestial beings, Jesus suddenly finds himself in a world where unbelief prevails. — *Godet*. Doubtless the spirit of Jesus was wrung by the contrast, so immortally portrayed in the great picture of Raphael — the Transfiguration — between the scene on the Mount of Glorification and that on the plain below ; between the harmonies of heaven and the harsh discords of earth ; between the peace and glory which he had left on the mountain, and this scene of weak faith, abject misery, and bitter opposition, — faltering disciples, degraded sufferers, and wrangling scribes. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. How long shall I be with you ? Ere the end of my mission be realized. — *Morison*. Till he had led his disciples to faith. Their slowness troubled him. *Bengel*. How long shall I suffer you ? Bear with you ; exercising patience with you in your unbelief. (Compare Exod. 32 : 19.) How great the unbelief of the people in view of the time he had been exercising his ministry, and the wonderful miracles he had performed ! And his ministry was drawing to a close. — *Bible Union Notes*. Bring him to me. The language of calm assurance. — *Abbott*.

20. And when he saw him . . . the spirit tare him. When the boy saw Jesus. The kingdom of Satan, in small and great, is ever stirred into a fierce activity by the

he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him ; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him : but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23. Jesus said unto him,¹ If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.

25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him,

straightway the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child. And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the

¹ Matt. 17 : 20. Mark 11 : 23. Luke 17 : 6. John 11 : 40.

coming near of the kingdom of Christ. Satan has great wrath when his time is short. — *Trench.* So it was with the Israelites when Moses began his efforts to save them from Egyptian bondage. They were treated more severely than ever before. The activity of evil is often never so great as just before a revival, and men's temptations never so severe as when their conscience is urging them to a new life. — *P.*

21. And he asked his father. To bring out his faith. — *Schaff.* To bring into strong relief the chronic, and therefore seemingly hopeless, character of the possession. — *Ellicott.* To inspire him with confidence, to bring back something of calmness to his soul, as the representative of the sufferer; it being impossible, from his actual condition, to do it with himself. — *Trench.* Of a child. A strong expression in the original, equivalent to saying, *even from a child*, even from childhood, without exactly fixing the age. — *Prof. George W. Clark.*

22. And oftentimes, etc. The father not merely answers the question, but, for exciting the compassion of Jesus, further describes the miserable condition of the child. — *Bible Union Notes.* Into fire (not "the" fire) and into waters (here, too, there is no article). He fell into them when he happened to be near them at the time the fit came on. To destroy him. He regards the demon as an enemy who would kill his own son. — *G. W. Clark.* But if thou canst do anything. The afflicted parent was not sure whether such an aggravated case was within the reach or scope of the great Healer's power. But there was, he seems to have thought, a peculiarity in his son's particular case that made it doubtful whether even so wonderful a Healer could do any thing to remove, or even to alleviate, the affliction. — *Morison.* Have compassion on us, and help us. The "us" is touching. The father, with beautiful benevolence of love, identifies himself instinctively with his son. He felt that whatever was done to his son was done to himself. — *Morison.*

23. But Jesus said . . . If thou canst believe. Morison says the *believe* should be omitted. So New Version. The man had said to Jesus, "If thou canst." Jesus repeats the phrase, and says in effect that the question is not whether *I* can, but whether *you* can. *I* am able ; but are *you* able to do your part? — *P.* There is a condition without which this thy child cannot be healed ; but the fulfilling of the condition lies with no other than thyself. The absence of faith on thy part, and not any overmastering power in this malignant spirit, is that which straitens me. And then, with a pause (as in the New Version), follow those further words, "All things are possible to him that believeth." So that faith is here, as in all other cases, set as the condition of healing. On other occasions it is the faith of the person ; but here, that being impossible, the father's is accepted instead. — *Trench.*

24. Lord, I believe. Thus the Lord appears, helping the birth of faith in that empty soul. And now, though with pain and with sore travail, it has come to the birth, so that the father exclaims, "Lord, I believe ;" and then the little spark of faith which is enkindled in his soul revealing to him the abysmal depths of unbelief which are there, he adds this further, "Help thou mine unbelief." For thus it is ever : only in the light of the actual presence of grace in the soul does any man perceive the strength and prevalence of the opposing corruption. Before, he had no measure by which to measure his deficiency. Only he who believes, guesses ought of the unbelief of his heart. — *Trench.*

25. Saw that the people came running. The miracle is wrought before the people have crowded round the patient, that, as far as possible, publicity may be avoided. — *Abbott.* The foul spirit. Foul; the word elsewhere translated *unclean*. He was morally impure.

Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26. And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28. ¹ And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And having cried 26 out, and torn him much, he came out: and *the child* became as one dead: insomuch that the more part said, He is dead. But Jesus took him 27 by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose. And when 28 he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, saying, We could not cast it out. And he said unto 29 them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.²

¹ Matt. 17: 19. ² Many ancient manuscripts add *and fasting*.

Dumb and deaf spirit. Because dumbness and deafness were the characteristic results of his occupancy. — *Morison*. Come out . . . enter no more. The cure is to be permanent. The father is assured that there will be no relapse.

26. The spirit cried. Uttering a shriek of rage and anguish at being compelled to leave. — *George W. Clark*. And rent him sore. Exceedingly. "Most unwillingly the evil spirit departs, seeking to destroy that which he can no longer retain," as Fuller, with wit which is in season and out of season, expresses it, "like an outgoing tenant that cares not what mischief he does." — *Trench*. He was as one dead. So dreadful was this last paroxysm that the child became as one dead. His bodily powers were entirely exhausted: he swooned, apparently with no breath and life in him. — *Bible Union Notes*.

27. Jesus took him by the hand. But the work begun by the word is finished by the touch of Christ. — *Abbott*. He infused into his frame a divinely reviving and healing energy. — *Morison*. The nearer we are to Christ, the more life and blessing we receive from him.

III. The Power of Faith. — Vers. 28, 29. 28. Why could not we cast him out? It was a great problem to them "how it came to pass that they were baffled in their attempts; since they were not exceeding their commission (Matt. 10: 8), and had on former occasions found the devils subject to them" (Mark 6: 13).

29. And he said unto them. His answer first was, according to Matthew (17: 20), **Because of your unbelief.** The whole difficulty centred in their want of faith. No demon could defy them if only they had faith enough. And then Jesus illustrates the power of faith by showing that even a small amount of active living faith, like a grain of mustard-seed, could remove "this mountain," perhaps pointing to Mount Hermon at whose base they were, and which towered in its grandeur above them. — *P*. The failure of the disciples had apparently been connected with the excitement and agitations of the last week. Peter's confession in their name, that they believed their Master to be the Messiah, had been sadly overcast by the shock to all their previous ideas given by his repeated intimations of his approaching violent death, and that a similar fate might overtake themselves. It had been a week of spiritual struggle, which Jesus designedly left them to undergo. In such a hesitating and half-dispirited frame, they had no such triumphant faith as when they had gone out on their first independent apostolic mission, and diseases and evil spirits yielded to their commands in their Leader's name. — *Geikie*. This kind. *This kind of demons, this kind of peculiarly determined and malicious demons*; for, among evil spirits, as among evil men, there are varying degrees of energy, determination, and malice. — *Morison*. Can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. (*Fasting is omitted in the New Version, but placed in the margin.*) The faith which will be effectual must be a faith exercised in prayer, that has not relaxed itself by an habitual compliance with the demands of the lower nature, but has often girt itself up to an austerer rule, to rigor and self-denial. — *Trench*. It is not meant, however, that *faith* might be omitted (Matt. 17: 20). Neither is it meant that faith must be merged in prayer and fasting. It is meant that faith must be in maximum degree, and that, consequently, those spiritual exercises which condition its highest attainable exaltation must be realized. *There must be prayer*, — the uplifting of desire till it settle in the will of God. *There must be fasting*, — the denying of all, of self, that would hinder the uprising of the desire to God, or its absolute repose in his will. When the desire reaches the will of God, and, entering into it, settles itself there, it has laid hold of omnipotence. No wonder, therefore, that "all things are possible" to the faith that goes along with it. No wonder that "mountains" are

30. ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.

31. ¹ For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

And they went forth from ³⁰ thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For ³¹ he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again. But they understood ³² not the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

¹ Matt. 17: 22. Luke 9: 44.

"removed." No wonder that the promise is illimitable, — "Ye shall ask *what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you." — *Morrison*.

The work of the Church is still to cast out devils, the unclean spirits of worldliness, selfishness, greed, infidelity, lust, intemperance, Sabbath-breaking. These still defy the ordinary efforts and faith of God's people. We have faith enough for ordinary duties, for some giving, for prayer-meetings, for building churches; but there is a work which ordinary faith cannot do. How shall we get that higher faith? By prayer and fasting. What is the meaning of *fasting*? It is really such a strong desire for God's work, for holiness, that we forget to eat. It is saying, I desire this good gift of God more than food, more than bodily pleasure, more than all else besides. So that putting away every sin at any cost, taking up hardest duties, confession of sin to our neighbors, doing all we can for the love of Christ, are expressions of the same principle which underlies fasting. — *P.*

IV. **Second Announcement of Christ's Death and Resurrection.** — Vers. 30-32. 30. And they departed thence. From the neighborhood of the Mount of Transfiguration, — the district of Cesarea Philippi. See chap. 8: 27. And passed through Galilee. They did not tarry much at any particular place. He would not that any man should know it. He wished to go quietly, with no crowds, no multitudes of sick to heal, occupying his time, in order that he might have time to instruct his disciples in the great truths of his religion. In due time they could declare these truths to the world.

31. For he taught. He was teaching his disciples. This gives the reason why he sought seclusion. He uses the imperfect tense throughout, denoting the continued or repeated result of his teaching. — *Cook*. The Son of man is delivered. By the counsel of God (John 10: 18). Here he again impresses upon them the great central fact of the Christian religion, the atonement, and the one which it was hardest for them to understand.

32. They understood not that saying. Luke says, *It was hid from them*. It was not time for them to fully understand. Matthew says they were exceedingly sorry. If the disciples understood what was meant by suffering and death, they could not reconcile it with what they knew of his person, and were probably at an utter loss as to the sense in which he was to rise again, — whether it implied entrance into a higher state, or restoration to common life. — *Cook*. Were afraid to ask him. They would fain have wished this explanation, indeed, at once, to calm their minds; but they hesitated to ask him for it. He might, perhaps, if they did so, tell them something still more unpleasant, as he had done lately to Peter in a similar case. Besides, they did not like to think about what they so much disrelished, and turned from matters which only filled them with gloom to others more in keeping with their wishes and hopes. They were too full of their worldly hopes, which still mingled strangely with their vague recognition of their Master as the Son of God; too unwilling, also, to think earnestly on a subject so unpleasant, and so opposed to their ideas of the Messiah, to understand what he meant by these sad forebodings. — *Gettie*.

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On *Lunatics*, see *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1876; article by Mr. Caldwell. Trench on the *Miracles*. Howson's *Miracles of Christ*, vol. ii. chap. 7. MacDonald's *The Miracles of our Lord*, chap. 6: "Miracles granted at the Prayer of Friends." Bertram's *Homiletical Cyclopaedia*, 1883-1887, on "the power of faith." Foster's *Cyclopaedia*, 11: 8599. *Sermons*, by E. D. Griffin, on ver. 23: "Faith necessary to Sanctification;" and by Prof. George Shepard, on ver. 24: "Help Thou mine Unbelief." *Tract: Capt. Ball's Experience*, on *fasting and prayer*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. All revivals of religion — as the "praying crusade" against intemperance a few years ago — illustrate what is meant by *prayer and fasting*.

II. A little spark of light shows not only light, but reveals the extent of the darkness. A little lifting of the fog, not only shows a clear space, but reveals also the greatness of the surrounding fog. Whosoever has a little real faith immediately prays, Help thou mine unbelief.

III. Trench's poem, *Mahmoud, the Idol Breaker*, relates the story of the great Moham-medan conqueror of India, who came in his victorious career to Somnât, a temple of peculiar sanctity in the south of Gazerât. He entered the temple. Facing the entrance was Somnât, an idol five yards high. Mahmoud instantly ordered the image to be destroyed, when the Brahmins of the temple threw themselves before him and offered an enormous ransom if he would spare their deity. Mahmoud, after a moment's pause, declared he would rather be remembered as the breaker than the seller of idols, and struck the image with his mace. His example was instantaneously followed; and the image, which was hollow, burst with the blows, and poured forth a quantity of diamonds and other jewels, which amply re-paid Mahmoud for the sacrifice of his ransom. — *Elphinstone's History of India*, I:554. So whosoever gives up his precious things to God, and makes great sacrifices for his cause (the principle that underlies *fasting*), will find his faith richly rewarded with heavenly treasures.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 14. The world makes a great point against Christianity through the failures and imperfections of Christians, while yet the world does not begin to do even as much as the Christians do.

2. Ver. 18. The world requires a great work from the Church.

3. That work is to cast out evil spirits, selfishness, worldliness, sensuality, infidelity.

4. There can be no peace or comfort to the world till these unclean spirits are cast out.

5. Ver. 23. Unbelief is always weakness. Men say that scepticism is the source of all progress; but they confound *doubt* with the *spirit of inquiry*. Doubt is always weak.

6. It is noteworthy that in this case, *where the child is incapacitated from the exercise of faith*, he is healed upon the faith of the father, or rather upon the father's aspiration after faith. — *Abbott*.

7. It is the beginning of faith that shows how much we need more faith. Let us pray for faith.

8. Ver. 25. The faithful labors and believing prayers of parents for their children shall not be in vain. — *George W. Clark*.

9. Ver. 28. It is not the Lord who prevents his benefits from flowing to us in large abundance; but it must be attributed to the narrowness of our faith, that it comes to us only in drops, and that frequently we do not even feel a drop, because unbelief shuts up our hearts. — *Calvin*.

10. There are evils which no ordinary faith will remove.

11. But faith, with the deepest earnestness and self-sacrifice, can remove mountains.

12. Ver. 31. We ought to be ashamed of that unreasonable bashfulness which makes us choose rather to continue ignorant than to discover our ignorance. — *Quesnel*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

I. Here we are taught *Lessons about Faith*. THE WEAKNESS OF UNBELIEF; THE POWER OF FAITH. (1) *The work to be done: casting out evil spirits* (vers. 14-17, 20-22). Let the scholars describe the scene at the foot of the mountain, and apply this to the work for Christians now to do. (2) *The failure of the disciples to do the work*, vers. 14, 18. (3) *The cause of the failure*, vers. 28, 29. (4) *The cure effected by Jesus through faith*. Here we are shown the power of faith; the prayer of faith; the value of our faith in behalf of others. (5) The lesson closes with *further instructions in the central truths of Christianity*, the truth which gives its value to all faith.

II. *Eugene Stock*, in his *Lessons on the Life of Christ*, uses the following plan: I. THE MOUNTAIN OF DIFFICULTY: the lunatic boy. The mountain made worse by the weak faith of the father: the result was a failure to cure. II. WHY THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT REMOVE THE MOUNTAIN. (1) *Their faith was too weak*: (a) their leader being absent; (b) their chief disciples being away also; (c) they in a discouraged frame on account of the cross; and (d) this such a hard case. (2) *They had not tried to make their faith stronger*: (a) by prayer; (b) by fasting. III. HOW THE MOUNTAIN WAS REMOVED. (a) The father tells Jesus all about it; (b) he believes; (c) he prays for more faith.

Are any children now possessed of the devil? Many. Then bring them to Jesus.

LESSON XII. — JUNE 18.

THE CHILDLIKE BELIEVER. — MARK 9: 33-50.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.* — ISA. 57: 15.

TIME. — Autumn, A. D. 29. A few weeks after the last lesson.

PLACE. — Capernaum, a town near the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 18: 1-14. Luke 9: 46-50.

INTRODUCTION.

After healing the lunatic child, probably in the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, the Lord, crossing the Jordan near its sources, would enter the northern parts of Galilee, and thus journey towards Capernaum. Matthew's language (Matt. 17: 22), "And they abode in Galilee," implies that some time was spent there instructing the disciples in the truths he had just opened to them. During these journeyings, and probably just before their arrival at Capernaum, the dispute referred to in the lesson had arisen among the disciples. — *From Andrews.*

33. ¶ ¹ And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest.

And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another in the way, who ~~was~~ the greatest. And 35

¹ Matt. 18: 1. Luke 9: 46; 22: 24.

EXPLANATORY.

I. True Greatness in Christ's Kingdom. — Vers. 33-37. **33. And he came to Capernaum.** In his journey from Cesarea Philippi. Here he was called upon to pay the annual Temple tax, and had sent Peter to find the amount in the fish's mouth (Matt. 17: 24-27). It was probably immediately after this (Matt. 18: 1) that he spoke to them about their dispute. **And being in the house.** The expression informs us that our Lord deferred questioning his disciples until he was once more in the house where he was accustomed to reside when he was in Capernaum — *Morison*. Probably Peter's. — *Godet*. **He asked them.** According to Matthew (18: 1) the disciples came to Jesus with the question, "Who is greatest in the kingdom?" Here Jesus begins the conversation. Townsend's explanation of the seeming inconsistency is reasonable. This is, that certain of the disciples had claimed pre-eminence, as James and John did later, that Jesus asked them of their dispute. That they were ashamed to reply, and that then the other disciples preferred the question, "Who is greatest?" Mark narrates the circumstances which led to this question, as reported in Matthew. — *Abbott*. **What was it that ye disputed (or discussed) by the way?** From the Mount of Transfiguration to Capernaum. Our Saviour asked, not for information, but to prepare their minds for certain ideas he wished to communicate. — *Morison*. At the time he took no notice of the dispute. He left their own consciences to work. — *Farrar*.

34. But they held their peace. Deep shame kept them silent, and that silence was the most eloquent confession of their sinful ambitions. — *Farrar*. **Who should be the greatest.** Who should occupy the chief position under the king, — the position of prime minister, as it were, in the kingdom that they thought he was about to inaugurate. — *Morison*. What seductive dreams lay for Galilean fishermen in their being commissioned by the Messiah, as his confidential friends, and the first dignitaries of his kingdom! They had as yet no other notion of the kingdom that was shortly to appear than that it would be a temporal one; that their Master was to become a powerful prince, with places, honors, wealth, at his command. — *Hanna*. Had they not received spiritual graces and powers? For what had they gone through so much toil and danger? The reward could not be far distant. — *Geikie*. Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him: he expects to be lord chancellor, or lord chamberlain of the household, and so to be the

35. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, ¹If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36. And ²he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and ³whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all. And he ³⁶took a little child, and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever ³⁷shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

¹ Matt. 20: 26, 27. Mark 10: 43. ² Matt. 18: 2. Mark 10: 16. ³ Matt. 10: 40. Luke 9: 48.

greatest. Judas had a bag, and therefore he expects to be lord treasurer, which, though now he comes last, he hopes will then dominate him the greatest. Simon and Jude are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take the place of all the great officers of state as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the Prince, and therefore hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and why should not he be first preferred?—*Matthew Henry*.

35. **And he sat down.** As teachers did while teaching. The lesson, which touched the fundamental principle of the Christian life, was impressed formally and with all solemnity. — *Cook*. **He called the twelve.** To come close to him. He wanted all of them to hear him. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all. Simply because the desire to be first, self-seeking, is exactly opposite to the spirit which is the law of Christ's kingdom, the spirit of love, of self-denial, of helpfulness of others, of humility. Therefore the more any one has of the desire to be first, the less he has of Christ's kingdom. So that the very desire to be first makes him last by the very nature of things. — *P.* In his answer Jesus gives us to understand that questions of this sort ought not to be moved at all. — *C. Barth, D.D.* The great law of the kingdom of heaven is not this, — *Use thyself for thyself*. Still less is it this, — *Use others for thyself*. But it is this, — *Use thyself for others*. — *Morison*. **And servant of all.** Despotism, self-seeking, ambition, ever make a man a slave. No one is so much a slave as he who desires to be first of all. He is a slave to his ambition, to the whims and opinions of other people, to circumstances. — *P.* But voluntary service in the kingdom of love, and under the impulse of humility and self-denial, makes a man a spiritual power, gives him an unconscious and blessed greatness. — *Lange*.

36. **And he took a child.** Matthew says Jesus called the child: therefore it was old enough to walk. As the house was probably Peter's, the child may have been one of his. — *Ellicott*. An untrustworthy tradition says that this boy was the martyr Ignatius. — *Schaff*. Our Lord first placed the child in the midst, and then took it in his arms, possibly drawing a lesson for his disciples from its ready submission and trustfulness. — *Alford*. **Set him in the midst.** As an illustration; as a living parable. Matthew says that he went on to say, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." They not only should not be first, but they should not enter at all, if they indulged their present spirit. — *P.* He himself had the ideal childlike spirit, — purity, truthfulness, simplicity, sincerity, docility, and loving dependence. — *Geikie*. "For such a little child is free from pride, and the mad desire of glory, and envy, and contentiousness, and all such passions, and, having many virtues, — simplicity, humility, unworldliness, — prides itself on none of them; having a twofold severity of goodness, — to have these things and not to be puffed up about them." — *Chrysostom*. He that is childlike in this empire is greatest (1) in real worth; (2) in social power; (3) in the estimation of God. — *Dr. Thomas*.

37. **Whosoever shall receive one of such children.** To his house or his heart. But it is possible to receive to the heart, when it is impossible or unnecessary to receive to the home. — *Morison*. **Receive . . . in my name.** *Receiving in my name* is serving with Christian love, and as belonging to Christ. — *Alford*. *Influenced by regard to my name*. We should lay emphasis on this expression. The Saviour is thinking only of actions associated with his name. — *Morison*. *How can parents receive children in Christ's name?* By regarding them as the lawful inheritors of Christ's spiritual promises; as the intended members of his Church; as being born, each one, to yield the world a Christian character, and thus as being profanely and terribly wronged whenever an irreligious indifference cheats them of this immortal portion, — this, Christ would teach us, is to receive children in his name. This is to take them for what they are, — solemnly to take them into our hands, as out of the hand of God. — *Bishop F. D. Huntington*. **Receiveth me.** Observe that the true way to receive Christ is to receive into our

38. ¶ ¹ And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: ² for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

John said unto him, Mas-³⁸
ter, we saw one casting out
devils in thy name: and we
forbade him, because he fol-
lowed not us. But Jesus said,³⁹
Forbid him not: for there is
no man which shall do a
mighty work in my name,
and be able quickly to speak

¹ Num. 11: 28. Luke 9: 49. ² 1 Cor. 12: 3.

hearts, for Christ's sake, those who need the hospitality of our sympathies, as the way to serve Christ is by serving the needy and suffering (Matt. 25: 40). — *Abbott*. Not me, but him that sent me. Not me only. — *Cook*. Not me as separated from the Father. The man's action does not find its terminus in Christ. It goes farther, and terminates on the Great Father. So that the will of him who receives Christ is in harmony with the Infinite Will. His heart beats in sympathy with the Infinite Heart. — *Morison*. When we love or receive him who was one with the Father, we enter into fellowship with him who is the Supreme and Eternal Love. (Compare John 14: 10, 23.) — *Ellicott*.

II. A warning against a Bigoted and Illiberal Spirit. — Vers. 38-40. 38. And John answered him. The words were so far an "answer" to what our Lord had said, that they were suggested by it. The disciple desired to show, as in self-vindication, that he not only "received" his Master, but that he was unwilling to "receive" any who did not openly follow him as a disciple. — *Ellicott*. The expression, "in my name," seems to have suggested to St. John a sudden question. They had seen, he said, a man who was casting out devils in Christ's name; but, since the man was not one of them, they had forbidden him. Had they done right? — *Farrar*. We saw one. The disciples had shortly before returned to Christ from their first missionary tour, in which they were empowered to cast out devils (Matt. 10: 8). The man here referred to they probably met during this tour. He must have been a disciple of Christ, who was enabled by his faith, yet without a commission, to cure the possessed. — *Abbott*. Casting out devils in thy name. Really, and not in a wrong spirit, as did the Jewish exorcists (Acts 19: 13, 14); for it was done in thy name. Such workers as this man believed in him, or they would not have used his name. They were fellow-workers with him, for they were seeking to rescue the souls of men from frenzy and despair. Their faith was effective; for, as the narrative implies, they not only claimed the power to cast out demons, but did cast them out. — *Ellicott*. We gather from this passage how mightily the words and influence of Christ had wrought outside the sphere of his permanent dependants, exciting in individuals a degree of spiritual energy that performed miracles on others. — *Meyer*. And he followed not us. What perplexed St. John was, that one not belonging to the immediate followers of Jesus should have wrought precisely the miracle which stood foremost among the signs of apostleship; that which the disciples themselves had so lately attempted, but failed to work (see Mark 9: 18, 23). — *Cook*. First, he did not follow Jesus as one of his attendants and pupils (Luke 9: 49); and secondly, that he did not follow "the twelve," as one occupying a subordinate position to theirs. Note the *us*. It is the point at which the spirit of exclusiveness and intolerance crops out. "He was faulty in not being so forward as he should have been in following Christ." — *Petter*. But it was not to be expected that all who listened to our Saviour's words, and believed on him, should leave their respective vocations and homes, and "itinerate" in the company of our Lord's personal attendants. The great majority of his inward followers would require to adorn the doctrine of godliness in their local spheres, and in the management of their private and personal affairs. Some, however, would have peculiar gifts, and would hence be called to peculiar spheres of service. The individual here referred to had one of those gifts, — *he had power over evil spirits, and could exorcise them*. — *Morison*. And we forbade him. Hindered him, so far as blaming him, and insisting on the abandonment of the exercise of his gift. — *Morison*.

39. Forbid him not. He neither praises nor blames him for following an independent course, and not working with his disciples. He simply declares that he must not be forbidden, and that those who work the same kind of work that we do should be regarded not as enemies, but allies. Thousands, in every period of Church history, have spent their lives in copying John's mistake. They have labored to stop every man who will not work for Christ in their way from working for Christ at all. — *Ryle*. For there is no one (not merely no man) which shall do a miracle — a mighty work (not merely a miracle) — that can lightly (hastily) speak evil of me. The work he has done in Christ's name will itself prevent him from forthwith using an influence against Christ. The principle inculcated

40. For ¹he that is not against us is on our part.

41. ²For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42. ³And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43. ⁴And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having

evil of me. For he that is 40 not against us is for us. For 41 whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And 42 whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand 43 cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to

¹ Matt. 12:30. ² Matt. 10:42. ³ Matt. 18:6. Luke 17:1. ⁴ Deut. 13:6. Matt. 5:29; 18:8.

forbids discouraging any work, *by whomsoever undertaken, minister or layman, man or woman*, which is really accomplishing spiritual results. — *Abbott*.

40. For he that is not against us is for us. Note the social *us*. The Saviour graciously associates the disciples with himself. On another occasion (Matt. 12:30) he said, *He that is not with me is against me*. There is no belt or borderland between right and wrong. He who is not good is bad; he who is not bad is good. In the highest sphere Christianity and goodness are identical. Christ is impersonated goodness. — *Morison*.

III. *Christ's Care for his Little Ones.* — Vers. 41, 42. 41. For whosoever shall give. The idea is, that, if so small a service as is here referred to goes not unrewarded, much more will the ejection of a demon in his name be approved and rewarded of him. — *Owen*. A cup of water. Here mentioned as the cheapest of all bodily refreshments, and therefore suitable to represent the smallest act of kindness done by man to man. — *Alexander*. In my name. With this motive, because he belongs to Christ; with the desire to serve Christ, and honor him, and express his love to him. — *P*. He shall not lose his reward. He shall be treated as if it were done to Christ himself. It will be accepted as an expression of love and honor to his Master. This truth is one of the choicest in the Christian's life. It transfigures and glorifies the commonest and poorest life. It turns the black coal of hard and commonplace deeds into diamonds, shining with the light of heaven. It is the alchemy, of which the ancients dreamed, that turns the base metals into gold. We may do *every thing* for Christ. All our deeds to men may be also deeds to God, and expressions of our love to him. — *P*.

42. Whosoever shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones that believe in me. The weakest and feeblest of God's flock, not merely the *children*, but the little ones, in intellectual and spiritual power and in ecclesiastical position and earthly honor. — *Abbott*. The child yet nestling in his arms, and furnishing the text for his remarks, he warned them of the awful guilt and peril of offending, of tempting, of misleading, of seducing from the paths of innocence and righteousness, of teaching any wicked thing, or suggesting any wicked thought to one of those little ones. — *Farrar*. Better that a millstone were hanged about his neck. We are taken, in imagination, into the presence of a certain dreadful scene. We see a millstone attached to a man's neck. The fastening, passing through the central perforation of the stone, is made secure. It is a sad sight. Yet, turning from another scene, we say, "This is better." It is better than that the same man should act the part of a seducer, and entrap a childlike follower of Jesus. — *Morison*. And were cast into the sea. Which was within sight. Death is a less evil than sinning, — much less than causing others to sin; for one kills the body, the other the soul. — *P*. This method of capital punishment was practised by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and possibly occasionally by the Jews. — *Abbott*.

IV. *Entering the Kingdom at any Cost.* — Vers. 43-50. 43, 45, 47. If thy hand offend. Cause you to sin or stumble; ensnare you into evil. Are we to understand these passages literally? No, certainly not. The meaning is, if an object dear as the right eye, and useful as the right hand, stand between you and your progress to heaven, and your complete surrender to Christ, that object, however dear, you are to part with. — *Cumming*. Hand. The temptation to do what is wrong, — forgery, stealing, murder. Eye. Lusting, coveting. Foot. Going into forbidden ways. He goes on to warn them that no sacrifice could be too great if it enabled them to escape any possible temptations to put such stumbling-blocks in the way of their own souls or the souls of others. — *Farrar*. Into life maimed. The meaning is, not that any man is in such a case that he hath no better way to avoid sin and hell; but, if he had no better, he should choose this. Nor doth it mean that maimed persons are maimed in heaven; but, if it were so, it were a less evil. — *Richard*

two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44. ¹Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49. For every one shall be salted with fire, ²and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands 44 to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. And if thy 45 foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather 46 than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. And if 47 thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes 48 to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For 49 every one shall be salted with

¹ Isa. 66: 24. ² Lev. 2: 13. Ezech. 43: 24.

Baxter. Into hell. *Into the Gehenna; the Valley of Hinnom*, — the place of future punishment. It was a common Jewish representation. The literal Gehenna was a valley to the south of Jerusalem, naturally "pleasant," as Milton describes it; but, having become the scene of the worship of Molech, "the abomination of the children of Ammon" (1 Kings 11: 7), its associations became frightful. It would appear also that it had become in later times a place of refuse, where carcases and other abominations were thrown. The consequence was, that "worms" would be there; and no doubt, occasionally also, as required, "fires" would be kindled to consume the noisome accumulations. Altogether, the uses to which the place had been put made it a graphic symbol for the refuse-place of the universe, — "black Gehenna," says Milton, "type of Hell" (*Par. Lost*, i. 405.) — *Morison.* Having been the scene of such pollution, wickedness, and torment, it became a fit emblem of everlasting punishment. — *Dr. Barclay: City of the Great King*, p. 90. The fire that never shall be quenched. The fires that were occasionally lit in the literal Gehenna, or Tophet, were necessarily only temporary. They died out for want of fuel. It was to be otherwise with the "fire" of the other and ulterior Tophet. The "fire" referred to is, of course, a mere symbol of the sum-total of certain dreadful realities, positive and privative, for which there are no adequate representations in human language. — *Morison.*

44, 46, 48. Worm dieth not, . . . fire is not quenched. An expression borrowed from the last verse of Isaiah, and probably in current use among the Jews of our Saviour's time, as applied to the state of future retribution. — *Morison.* Their punishment is represented by two metaphors, drawn from the different ways of burying the dead in use among the Jews. Bodies of men interred in the earth are eaten up of worms, which die when their food faileth; and those that are burned are consumed in fire, which extinguishes itself when there is no more fuel to feed it. But it shall not be so with the wicked: their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched. — *Macnight.* Their worm, . . . the fire. The gnawings of remorse, the stings of a guilty conscience, "the fire of the wrath of God," the pangs of memory, the unsatisfied action of the corroding passions, envy, hatred, shame, rage, and despair. Note the difference in the two expressions, "their worm" and "the fire." The worm is regarded as *belonging* to the body. The fire is considered as something outside. — *Morison.* So part of the punishment of the wicked will arise from their own natures, and part from the influences from without, — as a prison and conscience are the punishment of crimes here; as Sodom was consumed by fire rained down from heaven, kindling the bitumen with which its walls were built and its soil saturated. These terrible warnings at first seem strange from the lips of infinite love. But, in fact, it is love itself that warns men. Christ did not create hell: the alarm-bell does not create the fire. But Christ does all he can to keep men from those ways which of necessity lead to punishment. — *P.*

49. For. Our Lord is alluding to the pervading idea of vers. 43-48. These sacrifices of hand, foot, eye, must be made; *for*, — every one shall be salted with fire. "Fire is used in Scripture to denote suffering, persecution, trial, distress of any kind." Salt is used to denote permanence, preservation from corruption. — *P.* Every one, good and bad, must suffer. But every sacrifice (every one who makes himself the sacrifice demanded above)

50. ¹ Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his salt-ness, wherewith will ye season it? ² Have salt in yourselves, and ³ have peace one with another.

fire. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another.

¹ Matt. 5: 13. Luke 14: 34. ² Eph. 4: 29. Col. 4: 6. ³ Rom. 12: 18; 14: 19. ⁴ Cor. 13: 11. Heb. 12: 14.

is salted with salt; is purified and preserved by the fiery trials which he undergoes for Jesus' sake. — *P.* The allusion is to what is said in Lev. 2: 13, — *And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt.* For the disciple the fire consumes only what is bad, and leaves the soul freed from those moral combustibles on which the penal fire of Gehenna could feed. Every disciple of Christ is thus salted with fire. He is preserved from corruption, and consequent everlasting destruction, by unsparing self-sacrifice. — *Morison.* While others are salted only with fire, the same fire of divine purity becoming eternal fire of judgment to them. — *Schaff.* But if the salt hath lost its saltness, — i.e., the Christian the spirit of voluntary self-sacrifice, by which alone his purifying influence is exerted, — whence shall it derive its moral power? Have salt in yourselves. Have, that is, this spirit of self-sacrifice, and you will have peace one with another. There will be an end to unseemly strife as to which shall be the greatest. This accords with the actual experience of the Christian Church, in which it is almost universally observable that those who have suffered in Christ's fiery trial possess an indelible flavor and power of character and experience which makes them in a peculiar sense the salt of the community or church. — *Abbott.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Dr. Cumming's *Scripture Readings on Mark.* Farrar's and Geikie's *Life of Christ.* On vers. 33-38, see Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. 5, chap. on *Peace*; and the poem of Rev. Theodore Monod, in *Gospel Hymns*, No. 3, "None of Self and all of Thee." Vers. 38-40 are strikingly expounded in two essays on the "Intolerance" and "Tolerance of the Gospel," in Vinet's *Christian Philosophy*; and *Sermon*, by John Wesley, "Caution against Bigotry." On vers. 42-48, Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures: Orthodoxy*, "Is there nothing in God to fear?" *Transcendentalism*, "Final Permanence of Moral Character," *Conscience*, "The Laughter of the Soul at itself." Rev. E. E. Hale's *In His Name*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

Vers. 43-48. Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would one day or other depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think we would all consider it a primary duty at least to learn the names and moves of the pieces? Yet it is plain that the life, fortune, and happiness of every one of us depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. The chess-board is the world; the pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient; but also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid; and one who plays ill is checkmated, without haste, but without remorse. My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel, who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win, and I would accept it as an image of human life. — *Prof. Huxley*, in *Lay Sermons*, p. 31.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 33, 34. The worst disputes are often about the smallest things.
2. The desire to be greater than others is the cause of many quarrels and much evil.
3. Man's way to be great is to seek to be greater than others, — *self-seeking*.
4. Ver. 35. God's way to be great is to serve others, to do all we can for them, — *love*.
5. Note Jesus' great love for little children.
6. Ver. 40. Neutrality is impossible. Therefore (1) let him that is not consciously working for Christ beware lest he be found working against him; (2) let no one hinder any work that is not clearly opposed to Christ, for it may prove to be work for him. — *Abbott*.
7. Ver. 41. The disposition to give a cup of cold water to a disciple is a far nobler property than the finest intellect. Satan has a fine intellect, but not the image of God. — *Howells*.

8. Ver. 42. The greatest evil is to lead others into evil.
 9. Ver. 43. Make any and every sacrifice rather than sin.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson is full of warnings, THE WARNINGS OF LOVE AGAINST VARIOUS SINS AND DANGERS. (1) There is a *warning against ambition and self-seeking*, vers. 33-37, wherein Christ teaches true greatness in his kingdom, and illustrates it by a little child. (2) A *warning against intolerance and bigotry* (vers. 38-41), with the promise of reward for the smallest service for him, by whomever done. (3) A *warning against leading others into sin* (ver. 43). (4) A *warning to avoid by every sacrifice all sin, and its fearful consequences*. These warnings all proceed from love, lest men should commit these sins, and suffer their fearful punishment.

LESSON XIII. — JUNE 25.

REVIEW.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Bunyan represents Christian and Hopeful at one time "much discouraged because of the way," because the king's highway in which they were walking was rough; and, coming to a stile that led into some delightful fields called By-path Meadow, they left the true road, and at length were caught by Giant Despair, and shut up in Doubting Castle. After they had escaped, and were safely again in the king's highway, "they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that stile to prevent those that shall come after from falling into the hands of Giant Despair. So they consented to erect there a pillar, and to engrave upon the side thereof this sentence: *Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the King of the Celestial country, and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims*. Many, therefore, that followed after, read what was written, and escaped the danger." This Quarter's lessons are like such a pillar, showing us which are the *dangerous paths*, and where is the *King's highway* to holiness and heaven. The subject of the Quarter's Review will therefore be

GUIDE-BOARDS IN THE WAY OF LIFE.

The review may be conducted by each class separately, or, better, by the school as a whole, but in each case on the same principle. It is well to intersperse the exercises by brief written essays, chiefly by scholars previously appointed, or occasionally by the teachers.

I. **Introduction.** ESSAY on the COUNTRY OF GALILEE, especially near the sea, being the chief scene of Christ's ministry. Give a good view of the country of Galilee, and the three countries outside of Galilee which Christ visited. The sea and the mountain and the river brought into notice in these lessons. The period of time over which the lessons extend, and the part of Christ's ministry it occupied.

II. **Dangerous paths.** ESSAYS on (1) *The danger of going astray*. (2) *The special dangers of the young*, as disputing, ashamed of Christ, rejection of Christ. (3) *Special dangers of the older people*, as intolerance, ambition, formal religion, want of faith, a bad conscience. Let these be distributed throughout the exercise under this head. We find in this Quarter's lesson dangers of rejecting Christ, of a bad conscience, hypocrisy and formality, ambition, offending Christ's little ones, possession by devils, losing our souls, eternal punishment. How can we escape these dangers?

III. **The king's highway.** ESSAYS: (1) *The blessedness of walking in the way of life*. (2) *Christ's help for those in trouble*. (3) *Bearing the cross*. (4) *The power of faith*, — given each in its place. What is the king's highway may be shown by Matt. 22:16; John 14:6; Hos. 14:9. Its pleasantness, by Ps. 119:1; Prov. 3:17. What takes place in this way may be seen, — troubles in doing right; Christ's deliverance; bearing the cross, — followed by what rewards; the preaching of the gospel; Christ's feeding the multitudes, and what it taught them; Christ's healing the sick (how many cases), and what he taught by it; his trial of a woman's faith; his glory shown to his disciples; the three prophecies of Christ's sufferings; Christ instructing his disciples; the incident of the little child.

THIRD QUARTER.

From July 2 to September 24, 1882.

LESSON I. — JULY 2.

A LESSON ON HOME. — MARK 10:1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* — Ps. 101:2.

TIME. — March, A. D. 30; several months after our last lesson. The first verse belongs to the autumn of A. D. 29, and is an epitome of the intervening history (see below) between chap. 9 and chap. 10:2, etc.

PLACE. — Somewhere on Christ's last journey to Jerusalem from Ephraim (John 12:1), along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, and down the valley of the Jordan to Jericho (Luke 17:11; 18:35). The first verse describes Christ's journey through Perea to Jerusalem, on his final departure from Galilee (Luke 9:51).

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Ver. 1 with Luke 9:51. The discussion on marriage (vers. 2-12) is found also in Matt. 19:1-12. The blessing of the little children (vers. 13-16), in Matt. 19:13-15, and Luke 18:15-17.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Between the discourse of the last lesson and the discussion on divorce in to-day's lesson, — a period of more than four months, — many events occurred, the chief of which were: (1) The visit of our Lord to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, October, A. D. 29 (John 7:8-10), which was marked by (a) solemn discourses during the feast, and an attempt of the Sanhedrim to apprehend him (John 7:11-51, 8:12-59); (b) the opening of the eyes of one born blind (John 9:1-41), the revelation of himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18). (2) Return to Galilee (October). (3) Final departure from Galilee (November), (Luke 9:51; Mark 10:1). (4) Ministrations in Judea, and mission of the seventy (Luke 10-13:17). (5) Visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39), (December). (6) Tour in Perea (Luke 13:22-17:10). (7) The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46). (8) Resolve of the Sanhedrim to put him to death, and his retirement to Ephraim (John 11:47-54), (January, A. D. 30). (9) Goes to the borders of Samaria and Galilee; heals ten lepers (January, February).

INTRODUCTION.

Our last regular lesson closed with the ninth chapter. Then follows a period of several months, of which the only notice in Mark is the first verse of the present lesson, but during which time Christ goes several times to Jerusalem, gives much instruction, and does many wonderful works. Driven away from Jerusalem about February, A. D. 30, he spends several weeks at Ephraim, a village in the wilderness of Judea, five miles north-east of Bethel. In the latter part of March he goes to the borders of Galilee and Samaria, thence down the Jordan to Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem. On this last journey to-day's lesson occurred.

1. And ¹ he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the	And he arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan:
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¹ Matt. 19:1. John 10:40; 11:7.

EXPLANATORY.

1. And he arose from thence; i.e., from Capernaum (chap. 9:33), and here referred to as the centre of his Galilean ministry now about to terminate. And cometh. This

people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2. ¶ ¹ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.

3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4. And they said, ² Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

and multitudes come together unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. And there came unto ² him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. And he answered and said un- ³ to them, What did Moses command you? And they said, ⁴ Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her

¹ Matt. 19:3. ² Deut. 24:1. Matt. 5:31; 19:7.

marks a very solemn period in our Lord's public ministry. See the sublime statement of Luke (9:51), which relates to the same transition stage in the progress of our Lord's work. — *F. and B.* Our Lord now made his final departure from Galilee, his disciples going before him to proclaim him as the Messiah. They go south to Samaria; but, being repulsed (Luke 9:51-56), they turn to the east, and go along the border of Galilee to the Jordan, and probably cross the Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee. By the farther side of Jordan. The region east of the River Jordan, including Bashan and Gilead, called Perea (beyond), because lying *beyond* the River Jordan. In the time of Christ it was fertile and populous, and inhabited by a mixed population, partly Roman, partly Jewish. — *Abbott.* And the people resort unto him again. As they had done on the previous visit. (Luke 12:1). And he taught them again. He resumed his former plan of operation, no longer shunning crowds because in quest of seclusion with his disciples. He taught the congregated masses, as had been his wont. — *Morison.* Portions of his teaching on this tour are recorded in Luke, chaps. 10 to 18.

I. Questions about Marriage. — Vers. 2-12. The verse above is the summary of several weeks. This discussion about marriage occurred sometime later. (See *Time and Place.*) 2. And the Pharisees. Mark now resumes the history of the systematic opposition of the Pharisees. The tactics of the enemy had hitherto consisted in objecting to his conduct, etc.; but now, instructed by experience or advised by wiser leaders, they adopt the more insidious method of demanding his opinion upon doubtful or vexed questions which it seemed impossible to answer either way without giving offence and incurring danger in some influential quarter. — *Alexander.* Asked him, Is it lawful. It was a delicate question in the place where our Lord now was, in the dominions of Herod, Antipas, who had slain John the Baptist for publicly condemning the tetrarch's illegal divorce and illicit marriage. — *DeWette.* Tempting him. There had been among the Jewish Rabbis great discussions on the subject of divorce, and serious dissension. The followers of Hillel maintained that divorce might be lawfully effected at the pleasure or caprice of the husband; while the followers of Shammai contended that "putting away" was lawful only on condition of the occurrence of unchastity. Our Lord's questioners probably imagined that they would be able to get him to say something which they could make use of to "corner him up," or to diminish his influence with the people. — *Morison.*

3. What did Moses command you? (See Deut. 24:1-4.) In the laws given by God through Moses. He wished them to have in view their own political statute on the subject. It had been much abused in the controversies that had been waged. — *Morison.* And had been transformed into a command that divorces should take place. — *Schaff.* Christ did what it would be well for all Christian teachers to do on such controverted points, — ignore the disputations of men on the subject, and appeal to the authority of God. — *Thomas.*

4. Moses suffered . . . a bill of divorcement. Designed not to encourage divorce, but to make it more difficult. It was, in effect, a protection of the repudiated wife. — *Schaff.* Our Lord's explicit teaching opposed the perversion of this provision of the Mosaic law. The giving a bill of divorcement (in which was set forth the date, place, and cause of her repudiation) would in ancient times require the intervention of a Levite, not only to secure the formal correctness of the instrument, but because the art of writing was then generally unknown. This would bring the matter under the cognizance of legal authority, and tend to check the rash exercise of the right by the husband. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary.* Note, this bill of divorcement was a *civil*, not a moral law, and represented what was possible as a *civil institution*, and not what was to be the rule of moral duty; as is true of our civil laws to-day. — *P.*

5. For the hardness of your heart. Because they were so imperfect that it was impossible to make the civil law any stricter, and have it of any use. — *P.* There was no

5. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6. But from the beginning of the creation ¹ God made them male and female.

7. ² For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife ;

8. And they twain shall be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

away. But Jesus said unto 5 them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made be them. For 7 this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and 8 the twain shall become one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What 9 therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

¹ Gen. 1: 27; 5: 2. ² Gen. 2: 24. 1 Cor. 6: 16. Eph. 5: 31.

alternative between giving them imperfect political institutions, up to the level of which they could be lifted, and thence prepared for farther ascent, or giving them absolutely perfect institutions, which could not have been transferred into their practice even for a single day. Absolutely perfect political institutions would be adapted only to an absolutely perfect people, or a people who were on the eve of emerging into absolute moral perfection. — *Morison*. This verse is a key to much of the Mosaic legislation, which only reflected so much of the divine will as could be enforced by civil government. — *Abbott*. Christianity, from its very nature, can make no such condescensions. It is her problem everywhere to realize the *ideals* of the creation, a task which the new life imparted by God makes possible to her. In fact, Christ's decision in this particular case illustrates the entire relation of Judaism to Christianity, — *there* condescending to a rude condition of the natural man, which could not be removed by outward means; *here* the restoration of that which *was* in the beginning. — *Nesbiter*.

6. **Male and female ;** i.e., in the very act of creation God embodied the idea of marriage. Observe how the unity of the two is implied in the language of Genesis. (See Gen. 1: 27; 5: 2.) — *Abbott*. The Lord explains that they were not created arbitrarily, or independently of, but for each other, and as suitable and adapted for each other, as expressed in the original. — *Lange*. He thus shows, that from the beginning God had designed that the marriage tie should be the closest and most indissoluble of all ties. — *Cambridge Bible*. This statement swept away forever the conception of woman as a mere toy or slave of man, and based true relations of the sexes on the eternal foundation of truth, right, honor, and love. To ennoble the house and the family by raising woman to her true position was essential to the future stability of his kingdom, as one of purity and spiritual worth. By making marriage indissoluble he proclaimed the equal rights of woman and man within the limits of the family, and in this gave the charter of nobility to the mothers of the world. — *Geikie*.

7. **For this cause shall a man leave father and mother.** These words are from Gen. 2: 24, and are a statement of what would be the natural and necessary consequence of marriage; viz., that it would of course supersede the filial and all other previous relations. — *Alexander*. In Genesis these are the words of Adam; in Matt. 19: 5, the words of God; in Mark, of Christ. They are words of Adam as uttering prophetically a divine, fundamental ordinance; they are words of God as being eternally valid; they are words of Christ as rules for Christian life re-established by him who "adorned and beautified" the holy state of matrimony with his presence and first miracle at Cana of Galilee. — *Cambridge Bible*.

8. **Shall be one flesh.** That is, shall be so intimately united, that, in their earthly or bodily relationships, they shall constitute, as it were, a unit of being. Husband and wife, though in a sense *two*, are yet, if they fulfil the divine ideal, *no longer two*. They are but halves of a whole, — "one flesh." — *Morison*. They are to be one in life, in interests, in hopes, in sympathy, in love; forming one family, — the unit of the state. — *P*.

9. **What God hath joined together ;** namely, in his institute of marriage. Note (1) the word *what*. It is in the singular number. The Saviour's mind had gone forward, in conception, beyond the stage of duality into the stage of unity. Note (2) the phrase *joined together*. The word strictly means *yoked together*. Husband and wife are under a common yoke; and under this yoke, "lined with love," they are to work together as "true yoke-fellows." Note (3) that it is "God" who yokes them together in the institute of marriage. Marriage is his institute, his idea. — *Morison*. **Let not man put asunder.** What? Not even when there are insurmountable incompatibilities? There should be no such incompatibilities. *God's institute has never got justice done it in the world*. It is impossible to make happy in wedlock those who make no provision for united happiness in the interblendings of every-day life. — *Morison*. Our Lord's conclusion. The sentence forms a

10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*.

11. And he saith unto them, ¹ Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

der. And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

¹ Matt. 5:32; 19:9. Luke 16:18. Rom. 7:3. 1 Cor. 7:10, 11.

proper part of every Christian marriage ceremony. It is Christ's protection of this holy relation. It also implies a warning against hasty marriages, against ignorance and forgetfulness of the fact that it is God who forms the indissoluble tie. — *Schaff*. Marriage is the best state for man in general; and every man is a worse man in proportion as he is unfit for the marriage state. — *Bacon's Essays*.

This law of marriage is so strict and so strong because the most important institution, both to religion and to the state, is the home; and whosoever, by putting asunder what God hath joined together, injures the home interests, strikes a blow at the safety and prosperity, both of religion and the state. The true family is a Church in miniature, and a state in miniature, where are cultivated the worship, the knowledge of the truth, the influences of the spirit, which belong to the Church, and the obedience and moral virtues which lie at the foundation of the state.

I. *A true home* is the nearest earthly return to the Eden man has lost, is almost Paradise regained. Here Christ was born. Here he worked his first miracle; and almost his last words on the cross were to his mother about her home. Here is the closest union of heart and life that is possible. Here is the strongest love, the deepest friendship, the best school for training in all the virtues, the brightest altar of worship, the type of Christ's love to his people.

II. *How may the home become what God has made it?* (1) Obey the laws God has laid down in 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-28, 33; 1 Peter 3:1, 7, 8. (2) Love one another; let each one seek to make the others happy, and give to the others more than their rights. (3) Be truly religious, for religion binds souls together; and in mutually loving the Saviour, and joining in the same service of God, the members of the family are drawn closer to one another, as the radii of a circle become nearer to one another as they draw nearer to the centre. (4) Never neglect the little courtesies and attentions of life, being even more careful of them after marriage than before. Happiness is made up chiefly of little things. (5) It is as really the husband's duty as it is the wife's to make the home happy. Make it the centre of happiness for all its members.

III. *What can children do to make home happy?* (1) They can honor and obey their parents. (2) They can be full of helpfulness, each trying to do all he can for the good of the rest. (3) They can be courteous and polite to parents and to one another. It is strange that nine-tenths of all the cross, disagreeable, impolite words, are spoken to those we love or ought to love. (4) Bring the Christian spirit into the home; make it such that Jesus would love to be one of the family, as he loved to be in the home of Mary and Martha.

IV. *What spoils a home?* (1) Selfishness. (2) Neglect of expressing love to one another. (3) Clamoring for rights. (4) Irreligion. (5) Thoughtlessness. (6) Passion. (7) Crime.

10. *In the house.* Where Christ was stopping temporarily on his journey. His disciples asked him again. For they said, it was not safe for any one to marry if there was no escape from wedded bonds when they became galling (Matt. 19:10).

11. *And he saith unto them.* These words were uttered by Christ to his disciples alone. They are so explicit that it appears amazing that any who accept Christ's authority should have attempted to explain them away. But it must be remembered that Christ, neither here nor anywhere else, propounds laws for the state, but, in contrast with the laws of Moses, principles for the individual disciple. — *Abbott*. **Whosoever shall put away his wife.** The exception, specified in Matt. 19:9, is of course to be understood; for this unfaithfulness destroys the marriage relation. **Marry another, committeth adultery.** Because she is still his wife, and putting her away does not destroy this fact.

12. *Woman shall put away her husband.* The principles concerning divorce here inculated apply equally to either sex. (The student may consult to advantage the following passages as bearing on this subject: Lev. 21:14; Matt. 8:14; Acts 21:8, 9; 1 Cor. 7:1, 2; 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:3; Heb. 13:4. — *Abbott*.) While the Saviour's rule makes it

13. ¶ ¹ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

14. But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for ² of such is the kingdom of God.

And they brought unto him ¹³ little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus ¹⁴ saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me: forbid them not: for of such is the king-

¹ Matt. 19: 13. Luke 18: 15. ² 1 Cor. 14: 20. 1 Pet. 2: 2.

very hard in some cases, on the whole the community would be far better off if it were adhered to sacredly. People would be more careful in selecting partners for life, and more careful to live in peace and happiness together, if there were no escape. — *P.*

II. **Children coming to Christ.** — Vers. 13-16. It is a suggestive, if not a significant fact, that this blessing of little children follows immediately after the above discussion concerning marriage. — *Abbott.* In this incident the very heart of Christ is published to poor sinners; and we may clearly perceive the freeness and fulness of the mighty grace of the Redeemer, who is willing to receive the youngest child as well as the oldest man. — *Spurgeon.*

13. **And they brought young children.** Of varying ages, some of them able to walk; for, according to Luke, Christ called them to him. There were parents in those days wise enough to know that it was not well to wait until children were old enough to choose for themselves before seeking for them the blessing of a Saviour. — *H. C. Trumbull.* We bring children to Christ (1) by daily, constant, earnest prayer on their behalf; (2) by teaching them the truth; (3) by consecrating them to God for this life and the life to come; (4) by training them up for Christ. "Set before your child life and death, hell and heaven, judgment and mercy, his own sin, and Christ's most precious blood; labor with him, persuade him with tears and weeping to turn unto the Lord." — *Spurgeon.* The true idea of Christian education is that the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise. Never is it too early for good to be communicated. Infancy and childhood are the ages most pliant to good. And who can think it necessary that the plastic nature of childhood must first be hardened into stone, and stiffened into enmity toward God and all duty, before it can become a candidate for Christian character! "Train up a child," — how? for future conversion? No! "but in the way he should go, that when he is old he may not depart from it." — *Bushnell.* Give me children until they are ten years of age, and I care not who takes care of them afterwards. — *Purcell.* That he should touch them. An act expressive of imparting a blessing, and showing that the nearer we are to Jesus the greater the blessing which comes to us from him. Blessings come to those who are near, which cannot come to those that are afar off. This is true of physical healing, and of moral and intellectual influences. — *P.* His disciples rebuked those that brought them. "The erroneous apostles," as Richard Baxter calls them, thought that the Great Rabbi would be annoyed, and his attention diverted from matters of greater importance than any thing connected with little children. — *Morison.* They think it is to abuse the goodness and misuse the time of their Master. *How are children hindered from coming to Christ?* (1) By teaching that children cannot become Christians young. (2) By neglect of their religious training. (3) By the example of parents who are more interested in worldly things than in religion, who neglect family prayer, and the Church, and sabbath school. (4) By "all conduct on the part of the Church, the teacher, or the parent, which tends to repress, chill, or check the enthusiasm of childhood for Christ, and darken its simple faith in him." (5) By fault-finding with the Church and good people in their presence, thus lessening their respect and reverence for them. — *P.* It seems to me that the Devil would never ask any thing more of a minister than to have him look upon his mission as chiefly to the grown-up members of his congregation, while somebody else was to look after the children. — *Stephen H. Tyng, D.D.*

14. **When Jesus saw it he was much displeased.** The language of the original is much stronger: so it is expressed in the Revised Version, *moved with indignation.* The disciples had already been cautioned about their treatment of children (Matt. 18: 10-14). — *Riddle.* Some sign of displeasure was probably on his countenance. How careful we should be not to call forth his displeasure by keeping children from him! — *Schaff.* *Why was Jesus displeased?* (1) Because they were keeping away from him those who wanted to come to him, and for whom he died. (2) They were taking away those who were the very hope of the Church, the kingdom they were appointed to build up. (3) Because the children are the type of all who shall enter his kingdom. (4) Because he loved little children,

15. Verily I say unto you, ¹Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16. And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

dom of God. Verily I say 15 unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he 16 took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

¹ Matt. 18: 3.

and rejoiced in their love. (5) Because they were hindering the best workers in his kingdom, the mothers. — *P.* Suffer the little children to come unto me. To refuse children access to his grace was to misrepresent his spirit, his mission, and his kingdom. In bringing the children at that moment the mothers interrupted him in an important doctrinal discourse: yet Jesus suspended his teaching, and gave place to a sentiment, a symbol, a sacrament; for the blessing was of the nature of a sacrament. It signified that there was a place in his thought, in his heart, in his mission, in his Church, for children. — *J. P. Thompson.* For of such is the kingdom of God. Of such little children as those before him, and such as have the childlike disposition toward God. God wants little children in his kingdom. People are most likely to come into the kingdom when children, since all must become like little children in order to enter the kingdom. Children belong in the kingdom. There are two applications.

I. *Children in the kingdom of God in heaven.* Such as die before they have wandered out of God's kingdom into the kingdom of Satan are certainly saved, since they are "of the kingdom of heaven." — *Abbott.* Then, beyond a doubt, in that kingdom shall *all* the little ones be found. For it is not as children of Christians, it is not as baptized, but it is as *children*, that of such is that kingdom. — *Alford.* These children in heaven are saved by Christ, even as are older people. Christ must remove the nature that would otherwise bear fruit in sin, and must conform their nature to his own holy character. — *P.*

II. *Children in the kingdom of God on earth.* Perhaps it is as well for us to learn the lesson at once, so that we might accept the statement which the words of the Saviour would teach; namely, that little children are the true wards of the Church, and ought to be welcomed, cherished, and valued highly. — *Sunday School Times.* But it certainly does not teach that children are by nature, and without a spiritual change, *true children of God*, in the face of such explicit declarations as John 3: 5, 6. — *Abbott.* I argue that little children are not too young to be converted (1) because they are not too young to do wrong. (2) Because the regeneration, whether of children or adults, is the work of the Holy Spirit. (3) Because piety is a matter of the heart, rather than of the intellect. (4) It is a pleasing confirmation of our faith in very early piety to observe the many instances within our own knowledge and observation of the conversion of young children, and of their teachable spirit with reference to religion. — *Rev. L. S. Forwin.* Of the many boys and girls whom we have received into church-fellowship, I can say of them all that they have gladdened my heart, and I have never received any with greater confidence than I have these. And this I have noticed about them, they have greater joy and rejoicing than any others. Among those I have had at any time to exclude from church-fellowship, out of a church of 2,700 members, I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child. — *Spurgeon.*

15. *Whosoever shall not receive, etc.* Christ now holds up the children as an example to his disciples. He had the ideal childlike spirit, and delighted to see in little ones his own image. Purity, truthfulness, simplicity, docility, and loving dependence made them his favorite types for his followers. The apostles needed the lessons their characteristics impressed. — *Geikie.* This is a law that applies not only to the kingdom of heaven, but to all science and progress. Modern progress in the sciences, and in the arts of civilization, began when men went to nature as a child to learn what is, and not as a teacher to say what ought to be. — *P.*

16. *Took them in his arms.* He ever giveth more than men ask or think. He had been asked only to touch the children. He takes them into his arms, and lays his hands upon them, and blesses them. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools.* As I look at Christ in this, the most stirring period of his history, with the dark events of his last agonies thickening on his horizon, condescending to take little children in his arms and bless them, I feel deeper chords in my nature touched than when I see him hush the furious tempest, or raise the buried dead. — *David Thomas, D.D.* Every act of our Saviour silently assures us that he loves children. — *Tyng.*

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The importance of good homes. Mr. Kingsmill, in his *Prisons and Prisoners*, says that he inquired of thousands of prisoners what was the starting-point in their criminal career. In summing up the various sources he gives, I find that four out of every five criminals began their ruin through some defect in their homes, or from the want of a home. Mr. Talcott, formerly the superintendent of the Rhode Island Reform School, and Dr. E. M. Mosher, superintendent of the Woman's Reformatory Prison at Sherborn, Mass., both assert the same fact as Mr. Kingsmill. — P.

II. Home courtesies. "I am one of those whose lot in life has been to go out into an unfriendly world at an early age; and, of nearly twenty families in which I made my home in the course of about nine years, there were only three that could be designated as happy families. The source of trouble was not so much the lack of love as the lack of care to manifest it." The closing words of this sentence give us the fruitful source of family alienations, of heartaches innumerable, of sad faces and gloomy home circles. "Not so much the lack of love as the lack of care to manifest it." — Anon.

III. Christ touching the children. It is a law of light and heat, that their power varies inversely as the square of the distance. An object, for instance, twice as far off from the sun as another, receives only one-fourth as much of its light and heat. There is a spiritual law something like this. So that those who keep at a distance from Christ receive only a small part as much of the power of his love and goodness and strength as do those whose souls touch his. — P.

IV. On the mantel-shelf of my grandmother's best parlor, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle, and my wondering inquiry was how it could have been got into its place. But the apple remained to me an enigma and a mystery. Walking in the garden I saw a phial placed upon a tree, bearing within it a tiny apple, which was growing within the crystal. Now I saw it all. The apple was put into the bottle when it was little, and it grew there. Just so we must catch the little men and women who swarm our streets, and introduce them within the influence of the Church; for, alas! it is hard indeed to reach them when they have ripened in carelessness and sin. — Spurgeon.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 2. Some people search the Bible, not to obtain moral good, but to find difficulties with which to puzzle others; and they get only what they search for, the spots on the sun without its warmth or light.

2. Vers. 3-9. The happiest place on earth is a home when God himself joins the two together.

3. The home is the school of every virtue, requiring self-denial, long-suffering, courtesy, love, care for others more than for self, aiding joy and peace, cultivating brotherly love and temperance.

4. Let not man's selfishness, nor passion, nor wandering desires, nor thoughtless neglect, put asunder what God hath joined together.

5. What God hath joined together is best kept together by God, by religion. Let each one aid the other in a religious life, else, as Dr. Payson once said, "it makes me think of a dove endeavoring to fly upwards while it has one broken wing. It leaps and flutters, and perhaps rises a little way, and then it drops back again to the ground. If both wings co-operate, then it mounts easily."

6. Vers. 13-15. Let us not think the time wasted which is spent in introducing to Jesus those who, if they live, are to be the men and women of the coming generation, and who, if they die early, may be among the first to welcome us to our heavenly home. — *Mimpriss*.

7. Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church consecrated to Christ, and wholly governed by his rules. — *Jonathan Edwards*.

8. We should lead our children very early to Jesus. Let every Christian father and mother understand that when their child is three years old they have done more than half they will ever do for his character. — *Dr. Bushnell*.

9. Children can become true Christians very young.

10. It is a very strong motive for parents to become Christians, in order that they may train their children aright.

11. We should go with our children to church, to sabbath school, to prayer, to Jesus; not send them alone.

12. Children are hindered from coming to Christ by neglect, by example, by false teaching, by fault-finding at good people and good things.

13. We can trust our little children, whom God takes home, to the love and care of such a Saviour, and mourn not as others do who have no such hope.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We have here an excellent opportunity to teach children THE DUTIES AND BLESSINGS OF HOME. (1) *We have the good home* (ver. 2-9) ordained of God; what qualities make a good home; how children can aid in it; the example Jesus set as to home-life; the home as the training-place for the Church and the State, and the school for training in all the virtues. (2) *The good home spoiled* (vers. 4, 5, 9-12) by divorce, by neglect, by irreligion, by passion, by pride, by selfishness. (3) *The children of the home* (vers. 13-16) early led to Jesus, — trained for Jesus. How to bring them to Jesus. How they may be hindered from coming. Jesus as the children's friend.

LESSON II. — JULY 9.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN. — MARK 10:17-31.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *One thing thou lackest* (ver. 21).

TIME. — March, A. D. 30; soon after the last lesson.

PLACE. — On Christ's last journey to Jerusalem from the village of Ephraim, along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, and down the Jordan valley to Jericho. He had not yet reached Jericho.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee; Herod Philip, of other parts.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 19:16-30; 20:16. Luke 18:18-30.

INTRODUCTION.

After the events of the last lesson, our Lord continues on his way toward Jerusalem. As he is journeying, a young man follows him to know how he may inherit eternal life.

17. ¶ ¹ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And as he was going forth 17 into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit

¹ Matt. 19:16. Luke 18:18.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Rich Young Ruler.** — Vers. 17-22. 17. Was gone . . . into the way. From some house where he had been stopping. He starts again on his journey. — *Schaff*. There came one running. This incident is recounted also in Matt. 19:16-23, and Luke

18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19. Thou knowest the commandments, ¹ Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said

eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save 18 one, *even* God. Thou know- 19 est the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour thy father and mother. And he said unto 20 him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking 21 upon him loved him, and said

¹ Exod. 20. Rom. 13 : 9.

18:18-23. The three accounts should be carefully compared by the student. This case presents some remarkable points. (1) The man was of irreproachable moral character; and this amidst all the temptations of *youth*—for he was a “young man” (Matt. 19:22)—and *wealth*, for “he was very rich” (ver. 22). But (2) restless, notwithstanding, his heart craves eternal life. (3) He so far believed in Jesus as to be persuaded he could authoritatively direct him on this vital point. (4) So earnest is he, that he comes “running” and even “kneeling before him,” and that when he was gone forth *into the way* (ver. 17),—the high road,—by this time crowded with travellers to the Passover.—*J. F. and B. Running.* They that will have eternal life must run for it; because the Devil, the law, sin, death, and hell follow them.—*Bunyan.* Good Master, what shall I do? He sincerely desired salvation; and he imagined that some generous action, some great sacrifice, would secure this highest good.—*Godet.* What shall I do? (In Matthew, *What good thing shall I do?*) He had not yet learned that he needed first to BE GOOD, to have a *pure and holy heart*, before he could have eternal life. To inherit eternal life? That I may be among those that are true children, and, as such, lawful inheritors of the kingdom.—*Cook.*

18. Why callest thou me good? Christ does not rebuke the young man for employing what was nothing more than the language of respect by any pupil to a teacher.—*Abbott.* But he asks him whether he looks upon him merely as any other teacher; or does he recognize him as a divine teacher,—the only one who is truly good; the “good master” who knows all things, and whose teaching is eternally true.—*P.* There is none good but one, that is God. He does not deny that he is good; for he is the one who is good, even God (1 John 3:5).

19. Thou knowest the commandments. After uttering his mild rebuke, our Lord proceeds to answer the young man's question by exhibiting the moral character requisite as “meetness” for the enjoyment of everlasting life.—*Morison.* St. Matthew says that our Lord first answered, “Keep the commandments;” and when the young man asked, “*What kind of commandments?*” he seems purposely to have mentioned only the plainest commandments of the second table, to show the young man that he had fallen short, *even of these* in their true interpretation, much more of that love to God which is the epitome of the first table. Thus does Christ “send the *proud* to the law, and invite the *humble* to the gospel.”—*Farrar.* Defraud not. It seems as if intended to be a special application of the tenth commandment. One who had great possessions, gathered in the usual ways by which men gain wealth, needed to examine himself specially by that text. Were there no ill-gotten gains in his treasure?—*Ellicott.* Our Lord gives this enumeration of the commandments to bring out the self-righteous spirit of the young man, which he before saw.—*DeWette.* Without holiness no man can see God, or enter eternal life, for holiness is eternal life; and Christ came not to remove from us the necessity of keeping the commandments, but to give us the hearts and the power to keep them in their form and in their spirit.—*P.*

20. All these have I kept. There was, no doubt, great ignorance in this reply. He knew but little of any one of these precepts in the strictness, spirituality, and extent of its requirements, who could venture on any such assertion. Yet there was sincerity in the answer, and it pointed to a bygone life of singular external propriety.—*Hanna.* We may remark that this young man, though self-righteous, was *no hypocrite*, no Pharisee: he spoke earnestly, and really strove to keep, as he really believed he had kept, all God's commandments.—*Alford.* He is thus the type of a very common character,—one which is scrupulous in life, yet finds no true peace of mind in obedience (Phil. 3:4-6).—*Abbott.* The Devil never tempts us with more success than when he tempts us with a sight of our good actions.—*Bishop Wilson.*

21. Jesus beholding him loved him. Jesus read his heart in a moment, and was won by the evident worth of his character. As he looked at him, so earnest, so humble, so

unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have ¹treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

¹ Matt. 6:19, 20; 19:21. Luke 12:33; 16:9.

admirable in his life and spirit, he loved him. Could he only stand the testing demand that must now be made, he would pass into the citizenship of the kingdom of God. — *Geikie*. Jesus loved him because he was lovable: there was something in him worthy of love. He saw in him a possible saint of peculiar excellence, as an artist sees a possible statue of great value in a block of finest marble. — *P*. A peculiarly interesting fact, as indicating divine insight blended with natural human feeling. That love explains the following command, which might otherwise have an aspect of sternness. — *Cook*. One thing thou lackest. He thus proposed to him one short crucial test of his real condition, and way to clearer self-knowledge. He had fancied himself willing to do whatever could be required: he could now see if he were really so. — *Maclear*. What, then, is the "one thing"? One word expresses it, — LOVE. — *David Thomas*. Matthew says, *If thou wouldst be perfect*; i.e., complete, lacking nothing. He lacked but one thing, but that one was the chief of all; for love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10), and faith "the Siamese twin" of love, is the centre and soul of the true moral life. It is like a sun lacking light, or a fire lacking warmth, or a man lacking a soul. — *P*. Go thy way. He now gives him proof of what he lacked. Far from arresting on their way those who believe in their own strength, he encourages them to prosecute it faithfully to the very end, knowing well that if they are sincere they shall by the law die to the law (Gal. 2:19). — *Godel*. For they will by experience know they need something more. Sell whatsoever thou hast. The injunction of the Lord is manifestly intended to bring out the fact that the young man had made an idol of his riches, and hence that he utterly contravened the spirit, even of the first commandment. — *Lange*. The point where Jesus finds the young man's weakness is a very weak one with all the Orientals. Money, or other possessions, is the all in all with them. The people of the East cannot understand why people should travel, study, work, or do any thing, unless with the hope of gain. — *Isaac Hall*, in *Sunday-School Times*. And give to the poor. This was the purpose for which he was to sell. He was to use it for God and humanity, not himself. The man required to be pulled sharply up on the side of his wealth, to see whether the commandments or the money had the greater hold upon him. There was no other method of meeting the case. The fortress of self must be stormed. Every prop must be struck down, every link broken, or he must remain outside the strait gate. — *Joseph Parker*. What does this mean for us? The principle is the same for us as for him; but the form it takes in action may differ. That principle is, that we are to give up every thing to Christ — our property, our time, our all — to use as he would have us. We are to give so much as he directs; to leave all, and be missionaries, if he demands; to suffer the loss of all, if that is needful in order that we may do right; to spend upon our families, our business, our pleasure, just as Christ would have us, — we seeking to learn what is his will. One cannot be a Christian, and save out a single dollar from this consecration of all to Christ. Evidently Christ does not want us all to give our whole property to the poor, for then some one must immediately give to us; and by keeping it in business we have more to give away; and some of his own disciples, as John, kept their property. — *P*. And thou shalt have treasure in heaven. You will have the character which belongs to heaven, and God will reward you abundantly there for all your self-denials for his sake. Come, take up the cross. It was a great cross to sell all he had. But no one can be a Christian who is not willing to take up the cross of Christ, and serve him at any and every cost. The cross is whatever self-denial or suffering or loss or reproach comes to us in doing the will of God. — *P*. Poor, friendless, outlawed, Jesus abated no jot of his awful claims, loftier than human monarch had ever dreamed of making, on all who sought citizenship in his kingdom. — *Maclear*. Follow me. All these things are parts of one whole, the Christian life. He must have all, would he enter eternal life. Note his possible future as a disciple, compared with his obscure future as a nameless rich man.

22. And he was sad. He had been touched where weakest, but this was exactly what his repeated request demanded. — *Geikie*. And went away grieved. He shrank from the one test that would really have led him to the heights of glory at which he aimed. Great possessions. It was too much. He preferred the comforts of earth to the treas-

23. ¶ ¹ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that ² trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And Jesus looked round ²³ about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the ²⁴ disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel ²⁵ to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And ²⁹

¹ Matt. 19:23. Luke 18:24. ² Job 31:24. Ps. 52:7; 62:10. ¹ Tim. 6:17.

ures of heaven: he would not purchase the things of eternity by abandoning those of time; he made, as Dante calls it, "the great refusal." And so he vanishes from the Gospel history; nor do the evangelists know any thing of him further. — *Farrar*. Which would have been better for this young man, — to leave his goods to become the companion in labor of the St. Peters and St. Johns, or to keep those possessions so soon to be laid waste by the Roman legions? — *Godet*.

II. **Conversation about Riches.** — Vers. 23-27. 23. How hardly (with what great difficulty) shall they that have riches, etc. The conduct of the young man gave occasion to the lessons which Jesus addressed to his disciples respecting riches. — *Godwin*. A man is not rich in the sense here intended, unless he loves riches. A rich man is not properly one who only possesses great wealth, but one who is possessed thereby; not one who distributes it as being only a steward, but one who makes it the instrument of his own will, and places his supreme good and happiness therein (ver. 24). — *Quesnel*. The few who divide among themselves riches are in general regarded by their fellow-men as "the favorites of fortune." But their position has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. While they have great facilities for getting good and doing good, they are encompassed with great temptations. — *Morison*. Riches for the most part are hurtful to them that possess them. — *Plutarch*. If this text read, "A poor man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," how people would pray, "Lord, keep me from being poor!" — *H. Clay Trumbull*.

24. The disciples were astonished (or amazed). Christ's demand was totally at variance with the popular conceptions of the Messianic kingdom, in which all Jews confidently believed that every form of temporal blessing would abound. — *Andrews*. Children. Note the affectionate address tempering the severity of the declaration. — *Cook*. How hard is it for them that trust in riches! The keynote to the entire discourse, and, indeed, to the whole Scripture teaching on the subject of wealth. — *Abbott*. This second exclamation was evidently given to explain and qualify the one before it, by informing them that not the mere possession of the good things of this life, but overweening confidence in them as sources or securities of happiness, would hinder men's salvation. — *Alexander*. Though they who have great riches are prone to trust in them, yet not all. Our Lord discriminates where men do not. He has no ill-will toward the rich as a class, nor would he encourage it. It is only such an abuse of riches as makes a god of them, and foolishly trusts them to save instead of the only Saviour. — *Jacobus*. It is not the kind or quantity of the wealth possessed, but the kind or quantity of the attachment that is lavished upon it. The love of the penny may create as great impediment as the love of the pound. — *Hanna*. In fact, many who have not riches are seeking wealth as the chief good, because they already trust in it. — *Schaff*.

25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. This expression is proverbial. In the Talmud a similar proverb mentions the elephant. — *Godwin*. A fine, bold way of speaking, that need impose upon no one who has a spark of poetry in his soul. The key to its import is hung at the girdle of common sense. Southey caught its spirit, —

"I would ride the camel,
Yea, leap him flying, through the needle's eye,
As easily as such a pampered soul
Could pass the narrow gate."

"The text," he says, "is gospel wisdom." The Saviour intended to represent vividly and memorably the extraordinary difficulty of discharging the responsibilities and overcoming the temptations of riches. The attempt to explain away the phrase *a needle's eye*, as if it must mean something far less impervious to a camel than the actual *eye of a needle*, proceeds

26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not¹ with God: for with God all things are possible.

28. ¶² Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved? Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God. Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gos-

¹ Jer. 32: 17. Matt. 19: 26. Luke 1: 37. ² Matt. 19: 27. Luke 18: 28.

on an entire and prosaic misconception of the sacred imagery. — *Morison*. The natural interpretation of the phrase is the correct one. It is used to express, not the difficulty, but the impossibility of entering the kingdom of heaven by human power or skill. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man (i.e., as already explained, one who trusts in riches) to enter into the kingdom of God. — *Abbott*. So long as he trusts in riches, to enter the kingdom is impossible. *Why is it so difficult for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God?* (1) Because they feel that they have so much to give up to Christ. (2) Because of the tendency to trust in riches, and not to feel the need of a Saviour. (3) Because they are apt to engender pride that will not stoop to the humble service of God. (4) Because rich men are apt to be allied in business and socially with many who are not Christians. (5) Because in many cases they will have to restore ill-gotten riches, to change their business or methods of business, and sources of gain, which are not truly Christian. — *P.*

26. **Who then can be saved?** Since all may have some possessions and naturally love to have more. — *Schaff*. They would probably thus reason: since wealth-loving is such an immense obstruction to salvation, and since all men seem to have more or less of this feeling in them, "Who then can be saved? Where are the men to be found free from this money-loving impulse?" — *David Thomas*.

27. **Looking upon them.** The tenderness of his heart looking forth from his eyes. — *Morison*. **With God all things are possible.** Thus Jesus, in the twinkling of an eye, lifts the minds of his hearers from human works to that divine work of radical regeneration which proceeds from the One only good, and of which Jesus is alone the instrument. — *Godet*. The impossible thing, which yet is possible with God, is not the saving of the rich man, but the making of the rich man poor (in spirit), — one of God's poor, and so an inheritor of his kingdom. — *Trench*. The wider teaching is that wealth, though bringing with it many temptations, may be so used through God's grace as to be a help, not a hindrance, in that deliverance from evil which is implied in the word "salvation." — *Ellicott*. He alone can overcome this wealth-loving power, as well as every other element in the soul that is antagonistic to salvation. He has done so in millions of instances, and will continue to do so, *but never independently of the sinner's own agency.* — *David Thomas*.

III. **The Reward of Piety.** — Vers. 28-31. 28. **Lo, we have left all.** Their boats and nets and fish and father were *every thing* to them. They might, indeed, look for a reward; for it had been promised. But this temper is wrong, so far as it puts forth *claims* for our good deeds, as though we deserved the rewards at Christ's hands. What *pay* does a man deserve for giving up a copper or peppercorn for a palace? — *Jacobus*. The little that the laboring man hath is as much his *all* as his millions are to the satrap. — *Bengel*. The "all" which the apostles had left was not in every case contemptible. The sons of Zebedee had hired servants (Mark 1: 20), and Levi could make a great feast in his house. But whatever it was it was their *all*. — *Alford*.

29. **And Jesus answered.** In Matthew the Lord enters at once into Peter's thought, and makes a special promise to the twelve, one of the grandest which he addressed to them (Matt. 19: 28). Then in the parable of the laborers, which follows in Matthew (20: 1-16), he warns them against indulging pride on the ground that they have been the first to follow him. — *Godet*. **There is no man that hath left house, etc.** In the days of Jesus those who followed him were *obliged*, generally, to forsake house and home, and to attend him. In our time it is not often required that we should *literally leave* them; but it is always required that we love them less than we do him, that we give up all that is inconsistent with religion, and that we be ready to give up all when he demands it. — *Barnes*

30. ¹ But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31. ² But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

pel's sake, but he shall receive ³⁰ a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many ³¹ *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

¹ 2 Chron. 25 : 9. Luke 18 : 30. ² Matt. 19 : 30; 20 : 16. Luke 13 : 30.

Or wife. Left out, and rightly, in the New Version. **For my sake and the gospel's.** The Saviour formally distinguishes between himself and the gospel; and yet, with lofty self-consciousness, he realized that he and the gospel were inseparable. Without him, the gospel would be nothing. Without the gospel, men would know nothing of him. — *Morison*. The act of forsaking home and wealth must not originate in a far-sighted calculation of reward: it must proceed from devotion to a person and a cause. — *Ellicott*.

30. **He shall receive a hundredfold.** There are few wider promises than this in the word of God. There is none, certainly, in the New Testament which holds out such encouragement for the life that now is. They shall have, even here upon earth, hopes, and joys, and sensible comforts, sufficient to make up for all that they lose. — *Ryle*. The number, "an hundredfold," is manifestly symbolical, as the expression of an immeasurable advantage. — *Lange*. The spirit of true religion in the soul enhances a hundredfold the high enjoyment of earthly possessions and affections. No one can enjoy the earth as he who accepts it as God's gift of love. — *Abbott*. **Houses, brethren, . . . lands.** Not literally an hundred houses or brothers or mothers in the place of the one left, for that would be impossible; but an hundred times as much value from them, and blessing in them. What was a barren rock before becomes a gold-mine. — *P.* The Saviour is giving, as it were, *an inventory of the divine fulness of blessing*, so far as it is available for the most ample compensation of those who have suffered loss. The sum total of them all belongs to the true disciple. He gets a hundredfold more bliss than he loses. — *Morison*. **With persecutions.** That is, he must expect *persecutions* in this world, as well as a measure of bliss; though, as my disciple, he will have my favor and be happy, yet he must make calculations for not being exempt, while on earth, from trials on account of the cause of Christ. — *Ripley*. Christianity has operated as a general law to enhance the earthly prosperity of the race, to make wealth more general and more secure, and affections less liable to sundering through despotism, quarrels, or death. Friends are multiplied and friendships made sweeter and more sacred by Christianity, especially among those who heartily accept and practically show forth Christ in their daily life. — *Abbott*. **In the world to come eternal life.** Which, with its "eternal weight of glory," makes up for all the Christian's trials, not merely a hundred times over, but thousands of thousands of times. The phrase *in the world to come* is literally *in the age to come*. It is the age of the Messiah's undisputed reign, coincident with the age of man's perfected glory. It will be the beginning of an endless series of corresponding ages. — *Morison*. But what is all this to the hereafter, — **EVERLASTING LIFE?** Here are ages of enjoyment that no arithmetic can compute; oceans of pleasure, whose majestic billows rise from the depths of infinitude, and break on no shore! — *David Thomas*.

31. **But many that are first shall be last.** One of our Saviour's seed-thoughts. The contrast of what is, and of what ought to be, is not greater than the contrast of what is, and what shall be. Not a few of the noblest and wisest and best have been pushed aside into corners and hidden places by the more bustling, self-asserting, and self-elevating. But by and by the tables will be divinely turned, and every one will be found, high or low, in his proper niche. In the pyramid of the glorified, it will not be, mayhap, the highest dignitaries of the Church, or the most applauded scholars, or the most splendid orators, who will be found at the apex. — *Morison*. Many a martyr crucified on unseen crosses, and burned with invisible flames in some obscure corner of the city or village, or in the wilderness, will stand among the highest angels; and many a victor on the unseen battle-field of the heart will stand far above some whose names have been heralded down "the corridors of time." — *P.* The lesson taught to Peter and to all disciples in all times is, that those who seem chiefest in labor, if they forget that the reward is of grace and not of works, and exalt themselves above their fellow-laborers, may *altogether* lose the things which they have wrought. — *Trench*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. He came running. So Bunyan's pilgrim went running from the City of Destruction, with his fingers in his ears, and crying, "Life! Life!"

II. Jesus loved him. The famous sculptor, while walking one day in the streets of the city, saw a block of marble lying by the wayside. His eye caught the fineness and beauty of the marble, and he exclaimed, "I see an angel in that marble, and must get it out." So Jesus sees in man the angel that it is possible for him to be, and loves it, and seeks to get it out from the roughness and defilement of sin.

III. An hundredfold in this life. (1) As to the community, this truth can be easily seen by comparing a Christian home in a Christian land with any heathen home. The mother, the brother, the sister, the home, as Christianity makes them, are an hundredfold more blessed, more useful, more worthy, than the same in a heathen land. (2) The Christian, as an individual, obtains an hundredfold more than others from this life. The world is so governed, that a Christian, temperate life gives far the most happiness, take the whole life through. The educated musician gets an hundredfold more from music, the one of cultivated tastes an hundredfold more from flowers, from beauty, from literature. The devoted student finds an hundredfold more in the Bible. What is useless steam to one, becomes the power that moves the engine. What is barren rock to one, becomes a mine of silver and gold. What is but lightning to one, becomes the telegraph and telephone. — *P.*

IV. See Trench's poem, *Mahmoud, the Idol-Breaker*, who found greater wealth in the idol for his refusing the bribe offered not to destroy it.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 17. Eternal life is the most important thing any one can seek after.
2. We should *run* after eternal life: we need it now, and may never have it if we delay.
3. Ver. 19. Eternal life comes only by *inheritance*. We first become God's children, then inherit his life.
4. When we try to keep God's commandments, we soon learn that we need a Saviour to forgive and to help.
5. Ver. 20. It is possible to be so careful of the outward forms of right, that we do not know how much we lack the spirit.
6. Ver. 21. But he that lacks the heart of faith and love, lacks the very soul of morality.
7. Only those who yield up all they have and are to Christ can be his true disciples.
8. The right man to follow any cause, be it what it will, is he who loves it well enough to fling to it every thing he has in the world, and then think that not enough, and so fling himself after it. This last item often weighs down the scales in heaven, and the man gets what he gave himself for. — *Jean Ingelow*.
9. Vers. 23-27. Riches, by engendering pride, self-sufficiency, cares, and selfishness, often by being gained or kept by fraud and oppression, keep many from the kingdom.
10. The real evil is in not the amount, but the love, of riches. To love riches while we have them not, is as bad as to love them when we have them.
11. Riches are the baggage — impedimenta — of virtue. — *Lord Bacon*.
12. Never despair for ourselves or others so long as our God can do all things.
13. Vers. 28-30. God never fails to reward those who put all their trust in him.
14. Ver. 31. It is easy to misjudge people in this world.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The subject of this lesson is **ETERNAL LIFE**. (1) *The way to seek eternal life* (ver. 17): by running; earnestly; as the greatest prize. What is eternal life? (2) *The attempt to gain it by the law* (vers. 18-20): the outward keeping of the law; how it is mistaken for goodness. (3) *The one thing lacking*: a heart of faith and love (vers. 21-27). What Christ's command to sell all means to us. How riches, or the love of riches, keeps us from becoming Christians. *Why* we must sell all. (4) *The reward of those who truly seek eternal life* (vers. 28-31): the hundredfold in this life, — to the individual, to the community. (See Illustrative, III.)

LESSON III.—JULY 16.

SUFFERING AND SERVICE.—MARK 10:32-45.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*—VER. 45.

TIME.—March, A. D. 30; soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—In the Jordan valley, perhaps on the Perea or eastern side, on Christ's last journey from Ephraim, but before he had reached Jericho.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 20:17-28. The first three verses are also found in Luke 18:31-34.

INTRODUCTION.

Still continuing his journey to Jerusalem, and probably soon after reaching the valley of the Jordan, our Lord took the twelve apart, and announced to them for the third time his approaching death. Afterward James and John, with their mother Salome, came to him, asking for the seats of honor in his kingdom.—*Andrews.*

32. ¶ ¹ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. ² And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him.

And they were in the way, ³² going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen

¹ Matt. 20:17 Luke 18:31. ² Chap 8:31; 9:31. Luke 9:22; 18:31.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Third Announcement of Christ's Death.—Ver. 32-34. **32. And they were in the way.** The scene with the rich young man happened while they were going out into the highway. Now they had reached the highway, and were in it, with their faces set toward Jerusalem.—*Morison.* **Going up to Jerusalem.** From Ephraim, sixteen miles north-east of the city, where he had spent some weeks in retirement. He first went up to the borders of Galilee and Samaria, thence to the Jordan, in whose valley they now were. **Jesus went before them.** As on the former occasion, our Lord Jesus, for our instruction, showed forth his prudence in fleeing, so now he shows forth his fortitude; because, when the appointed time draws near, he returns of his own accord to offer himself to suffering.—*Cardinal Bonaventura.* There are few pictures in the Gospel more striking than this of Jesus going forth to his death, and walking alone along the path into the deep valley, while behind him, in awful reverence and mingled anticipations of dread and hope, the disciples walked, and dared not disturb his meditations.—*Farrar.* It was as though the burden of the work on which he was entering pressed heavily on his soul. The shadow of the cross had fallen on him. He felt something of the conflict that reached its full intensity in Gethsemane.—*Ellicott.* The Master does not ask us to walk in unknown or untried paths. We find him always before us, leaving unmistakable footprints for our guidance all along the way. He leads: we have but to follow.—*W.* **And they were amazed . . . were afraid.** For they now distinctly perceived that their Master intended to proceed with the pilgrims to Jerusalem; and they held back in dismay, knowing that his destruction had been determined on by the ruling authorities there.—*Kitto.* They seemed to hang back as men foreboding peril, and really amazed that their Master should throw himself into such danger.—*Cowles.* **As they followed.** (Revised, *They that followed.*) Including more than the twelve. **And he took again.** This was for the third time. The two previous occasions are described in Mark 8:31, and Mark 9:30-32. (See Second Quarter, Lessons VIII. and XI.) This repetition shows the importance of our Lord's death. The particulars are now more full and more clear than ever before. Matthew (20:17) distinctly tells us that this mournful communication was made *privately* to the apostles.—*Maclear.* **And began to tell them.** He had done so before, but they had only the dimmest apprehension of what he meant.—*Morison.* The expression intimates that a series of new and decisive explanations took place. These consisted in, (1) the decision of the time of his death; (2) the more precise statement of the form of suffering; (3) in the more precise definition of the critical elements of the passion, especially his execution by the hands of the Gentiles.—*Langs.*

33. *Saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.

35. ¶ ¹ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

unto him, *saying*, Behold, we 33 go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and 34 shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him; and after three days he shall rise again.

And there come near unto 35 him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatso-

¹ Matt. 20: 20

33. **We go up to Jerusalem.** Jerusalem was to be the scene of his suffering, and their present journey is to end in it. — *Ellicott*. He reveals to them more than their fears. — *Jacobus*. He sees Gethsemane and Calvary in the distance, but, nevertheless, goes straight on to the cross for the good of man. This is the sublime heroism of love. This is a perfect example of true greatness. — *P*. He went on (1) because it was foretold; (2) it was his Father's will; (3) from love to sinners; (4) for the joy set before him. — *Stock*. **Delivered unto**; i.e., betrayed. **Chief priests and scribes**. The high priest, and the learned men who composed the Sanhedrim, or Great Council of the nation. He was thus betrayed by Judas. — *Barnes*. **And they shall condemn him to death**. It was in the power of the Sanhedrim, the highest tribunal among the Jews, to pass sentence of death; but the executing of the sentence belonged only to the Roman governor. — *Ripley*. **Deliver him to the Gentiles**. The two grand divisions of the human race for whom he died thus taking part in crucifying the Lord of Glory. — *J. F. and B*. The *Jews*, out of envy and malice, delivered him up; the *Gentiles*, out of ignorance, profaneness, and unjust partiality, condemned and executed him, — whereby the ingratitude, iniquity, and impiety of all mankind in some sort did appear, and was aptly represented; and, in consequence thereof, his infinite goodness is demonstrated. — *Barrows*.

34. **Shall mock him, scourge him, etc.** All these are new elements in the prediction, as if what had before been presented in dim outline to the disciples was now brought vividly, in every stage of its progress, before his mind and theirs. — *Plumptre*. St. Luke lays stress upon the fact that the disciples would not and could not understand his words (Luke 18: 34). This absence of all sympathy was one of his greatest trials. — *Maclear*. We must learn to *love* divine truths before we can understand them. — *Pascal*. Their minds were full of Messianic hopes. They were so pre-occupied with the conviction that now the kingdom of God was to come in all its splendor, that the prophecy passed by them like the idle wind. — *Farrar*. That they should have clung so tenaciously to the popular notion of an *unsuffering* Messiah may surprise us; but it gives inexpressible weight to their after-testimony to a suffering and dying Saviour. — *J. F. and B*. **Shall rise again**. As the sun breaks through dark clouds, so does this promise here again shed its blessed light. — *Lange*. The resurrection of Christ is as essential as his sufferings, the crown as the cross, the living Saviour as the atoning Saviour. All the rest would have been a failure without this. The resurrection gives the crown and the power and the joy to suffering love. It is the peace after the storm, the dawn after the night, the victory after the battle. — *P*.

II. **The Ambitious Disciples.** — Vers. 35-45. 35. **James and John.** And with them their mother Salome (Matt. 20: 20). She was one of the constant attendants on our Lord, and now, falling on her knees, preferred her request. Nothing could have been more ill-timed than this selfish petition when he was going forth to his death. — *Maclear*. We cannot be sure with which of the parties the movement originated; but as our Lord, even in Matthew's account, addresses himself to James and John, making no account of the mother, it is likely the mother was merely set on by them. — *J. F. and B*. Probably the sons brought their mother with them, as the modern office-seeker seeks through the intervention of another. — *Abbott*. **Do for us**. Our Lord speaks of sufferings; the disciples dispute for pre-eminence. How instructive the contrast! how vast the difference between the mind of God and the mind of man! — *J. Ford*. So different, as yet, were the two men from what they were afterwards to become, when they had drunk more deeply of their Master's spirit! — *Geskie*. **Whatsoever we shall desire** (or *ask* in the Revised). They begin as if ashamed of their request, or conscious that it might be properly refused, by desiring Christ to grant it without hearing it. — *Alexander*.

36. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37. They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

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But Jesus said unto them, Ye 38
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able to drink the cup that I
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the baptism that I am bap-

36. **What would ye?** Our Lord wished the two disciples to spread out, under the light of his observation and of their own reflection, what was lying in their hearts. — *Morison*.

37. **Grant unto us that we may sit.** The semblance of a plea for so presumptuous a request might possibly have been drawn from the fact that one of the two usually leaned on the breast of Jesus, or sat next him at meals, while the other was one of the favored three. — *J. F. and B.* **One on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.** The request was certainly more honest than modest. They were sure that their Lord must be a king, though at present in disguise. In imagination they saw the disguise thrown off; and, lo! he is seated on a gorgeous throne, surrounded with all the insignia of royal state. They wish to bask in his immediate sunshine, and to be the highest of the high who should be privileged to surround his person. — *Morison*. The places close to the throne were those of honor. In a Rabbinical work, it is said that God will seat the king Messiah at his right hand, and Abraham at his left. — *Alford*. There was a good motive close beside the unworthy motive, and it may have hid the bad from their consciousness. They wanted to be *near their Lord* hereafter as they had been here. — *P.* Observe, the promises of the Lord are places of *trust, power, and activity* (Matt. 19: 28; 25: 21, 23). The request here is simply for places of *honor*. — *Abbott*. That venomous worm of goodness, vainglory. — *Leighton*. Adam and Eve were happy in the garden of Eden until they desired to be as gods. — *Tyng*. Pride is the inmost coat, which we put off last, and which we put on first. — *Bishop Hall*.

38. **Ye know not what ye ask.** An illustration this of ignorant prayer. Within a month they saw the places on his right hand and on his left occupied by the two thieves in the crucifixion; and they could not have failed to realize then the solemn significance of Christ's declaration, and of the question which followed. — *Abbott*. They knew not the greatness of the favor they asked, — how blessed beyond their highest dreams it was to sit on the right hand of the Son of God, how radiant the glories of that kingdom were to be. They know not how hard the way, nor how difficult the conditions on which alone they could have their desire. No one knows enough to wisely choose his own lot. There are hidden cares and burdens and trials in the riches and honors we seek, — "the loudest laugh of hell, the pride of dying rich:" there are glories and joys and powers in the future as yet concealed from us. They only are wise who desire that God's wisdom and love should choose their lot for them. — *P.* Our heavenly Father always sends his children the things they ask, or better things. He answers their petitions in kind or in kindness; but, while we think only of ease, he consults our profit. We are urgent about the body; he is about the soul. — *R. Cecil*. **Can ye drink of the cup?** The *cup* is an Old-Testament image of a man's lot, or portion, as holding what of life God pours out for him. — *Jacobus*. He who knows nothing of the cup of Christ's passion will have no part in the cup of his joy. — *Heubner*. **Be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?** Baptism is the ordinance, the necessary condition by which one could enjoy the privileges of the visible Church. Could these disciples endure the conditions — the agony, the humiliation, the cross — through which alone Christ could enter his glory, and become the king of the world? — *P.* Are ye able and fit to be dipped or drenched in those deep waters of affliction, pains, and miseries, in which I must shortly be drenched? — *Petter*. The distinction between the two figures seems to be twofold: (1) the *cup* signifies inward, the *baptism* outward suffering, drinking and baptizing being respectively an inward and outward application of water; (2) the *cup* signifies suffering voluntarily taken, or "drunk," and the baptism what is endured at the hands of others. — *Eugene Stock*. There appears to be here a latent reference to the sacraments. In that case the cup of the Lord's Supper must be regarded by the communicant as a pledge to share the sorrows of him who was in travail for the sins of the world, and baptism as an admission to the kingdom whose perfected glory is the harvest of a sowing of trials and tears. — *Abbott*.

39. **We can.** Through all the selfishness and ambition, and the ignorance of the future

39. And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41. ¹And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

tized with? And they said 39 unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my 40 right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give: but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared. And when the 41 ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. And 42

¹ Matt. 20 : 24.

that their request revealed, there shone out in this prompt and no doubt perfectly honest reply a true and deep attachment to their Master, a readiness to suffer with him or for him. And he is far quicker to recognize the one than to condemn the other. — *Hanna*. This statement implied an over-estimate of their own strength, or rather a want of knowledge of their weakness and impotence which afterward became manifest during the night of Christ's betrayal. Still it is not to be questioned that they were the most courageous among the disciples. — *Lange*. They would have promised less had they known more. — *Biblical Museum*. Ye shall indeed. They cannot do it now; but in due time they shall follow him: they shall rise to their calling, and bravely meet all its risks and hardships. — *B. R. C.* One of these brethren was the first of the apostles to drink the cup of suffering, and be baptized with the baptism of blood (Acts 12:1, 2); the other had the longest experience among them of a life of trouble and persecution. — *Alford*. He would teach us what great capacities and hidden powers lie in a true disciple's life, capacities which are never suspected until they are called into exercise. No man knows his own strength: far less is he able to foresee the divine strength which shall be added to his own. When the night comes we learn how little we knew our own capacity for bearing the cross. — *B. R. C.* Yes, they were dear believers and blessed men, in spite of this unworthy ambition, and their Lord knew it; and perhaps the foresight of what they would have to pass through, and the courageous testimony he would yet receive from them, was the cause of that gentleness which we cannot but wonder at in his reproof. — *J. F. and B.* Christ puts the disinterested spirit at the very centre and core of the whole message: Drink of my cup; be baptized with my baptism, — no matter where you sit, on thrones or footstools! — *F. D. Huntington*. And so our Lord teaches us that nearness to him in character and life here is the one essential preparation for being with him forever. Where Christ's spirit is there is Christ himself. — *A. Watson*.

40. To sit on my right hand. In a worldly kingdom, if one sits at the right hand and another on the left, that special honor prevents any one else from obtaining it; but in Christ's kingdom there is no such exclusiveness. By the very nature of spiritual greatness it seeks to make others as great. — *A. Watson*. Is not mine to give. The highest honors of his kingdom were not now to be disposed of by him to gratify the worldly ambition of any one. In this sense they were not *his to give*, as Mediator, save to those for whom they had been prepared of the Father. Christ and the Father are one, and it was not his to follow any inferior bias in the disposing of places in his kingdom: he disposes according to the will of the Father, who hath bid us look for glory and honor and immortality in following Christ humbly and faithfully to the end. The correct sense is seen by leaving out that part of the verse in *Italics* which is not in the original. For whom it is (*hath been*, in the Revised) prepared. The Father had a plan in reference to the honors of the kingdom. It was perfect and unalterable. According to it the chief places were disposed of (in purpose), and could be given to no others. The lowliest would be the loftiest. They who gave up most would get most. He who goes nearest in time to Christ the crucified, shall get nearest in eternity to Christ the glorified. — *Morison*. The things God hath "prepared" may be divided into two classes, — the *given* and the *gained*. Light, air, existence, Jesus, the Bible, are in the former class the *given*. Luxuriant crops, mental discipline, knowledge, character, are of the second class, the *gained*. Greatness is of this latter class: it cannot be *directly* given. No one can carry thee up the "holy hill" of true greatness. Thou must climb its height thyself, though the Father hath prepared them for thee. — *Genius of the Gospel*. Our Lord, it will be observed, does not *deny* the petition of James and John, or say they shall not occupy the place in his kingdom which they now improperly sought. For aught we know, *that may be their true place*. All we are sure of is, that their asking it was displeasing to him "to whom all judgment is committed," and so was not fitted to gain their object, but just the reverse.

42. But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, ¹Ye know that they which ²are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43. ³But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45. For even ⁴the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and ⁵to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

¹ Luke 22:25. ² Or, *think good*. ³ Matt. 20:26, 28. Mark 9:35. Luke 9:48. ⁴ John 13:14. Phil. 2:7. ⁵ Matt. 20:28. 1 Tim. 2:6. Tit. 2:14.

41. **Began to be much displeased.** (*Moved with indignation*, so Matthew and the Revised.) The indignation of the "ten" displayed the same spirit and motive as the request of the sons of Zebedee. — *Cambridge Bible*. It is very common that in the very act of condemning our brethren we are guilty of the same or worse faults than those we condemn. — *P*. Such human weakness was sadly out of place at any time among the followers of the meek and lowly Son of man, but still more so now when he stood almost under the shadow of the cross; and it must have caused him the keenest sorrow. — *Geikie*. Blessed is that man who can sincerely rejoice when others are exalted, though he himself is overlooked and passed by. — *Ryle*. As the spirit of the two disciples now angered the ten, so the ambition of the few has from the beginning socially disturbed and oftentimes angered the many. — *Thomas*.

42. **Called them to him.** Their controversy in the last verse had been carried on aside and apart from Jesus. — *Abbott*. He pointed out how utterly they had misapprehended the nature of his kingdom, notwithstanding all his teaching through the past years. — *Geikie*. Ye know that they which are accounted to rule. It does not say "those who rule," which God alone does, but "those who are accounted to rule." — *Alford*. Moreover, the apparent are rarely the real rulers. — *Abbott*. That is no true rule which rests on self-assertion or the right of might. — *Ellicott*. **Exercise lordship**; or, lord it over them. The several governments, both in the East and West, in our Lord's time, tyrannized and exercised arbitrary power over the people. — *Mimpriss*. The essence of Gentile government, the ruling ambition, is signified. — *Meyer*. **Great ones exercise authority**. As Cesar, to whom these lesser rulers give account. Tyrants and the slaves of other tyrants. — *Biblical Museum*.

43. **So shall it not be among you.** No such lordship, no such authority, can be tolerated in your fraternity. The case is a pungent but oft-needed rebuke of unhallowed ambition. Men prominent in the Church should be the first to heed this admonition. — *Cowles*. Nearly all the evils that have come to the Church have come through a disregard of this command, — a desire to be honored and to rule, rather than to serve and to help. — *P*. Fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels. How can man, then, the image of his Maker, hope to win by it? — *Shakespeare*. **Whosoever will be great . . . shall be your minister.** Your *deacon, servant*. Greatness in the kingdom of heaven consists in *doing*, rather than in *being*, and in doing for others, rather than for self. No man has a right to be his own end. And the man who seeks to make himself his own principal end, is an inverted pyramid. — *Morison*. What Jesus teaches is the dignity of service in the kingdom of heaven. The measure of true greatness is not determined by the numbers that attend on us, but rather by *the numbers we benevolently attend upon*. Its sceptre is love, not force: its throne is in the heart. — *Genius of the Gospel*. Who shall occupy the places at his right hand and at his left he has revealed to none: but, though their names are secret, their characters are manifest; they will be *humble*. — *Tyng*.

44. **Chiefest shall be servant of all.** The word "minister" in the former verse is a name given to any who occasionally attended others, or was statedly employed to render a particular kind of service; but "servant" here (or *slave*) signifies one whose whole business is to serve, and who is the property of another. The words "of all" increase the gradation. — *Doddridge*. In the kingdom about to be set up, all my servants shall be equal; and the only "greatness" known to it shall be the greatness of humility, and devotedness to the service of others. — *David Brown, D.D.* This is true of the Church as a whole, as well as each individual in it. It has power and true success, only so far as it seeks to help all people, and does not seek authority or honor for itself. — *P*.

45. Came not to be ministered unto. His appearing in the world was not to be ministered unto, not to be personally served by others, nor to exercise an external authority for his own external interest, but to serve others, as his whole ministry showed. Christ's *example* enforces the lesson of humility, but a deeper truth is now for the first time declared. — *Schaff*. **But to minister.** In no case did Jesus seek honor from men, but always how he might help and serve men. He asks of us only what he did himself. He shows us by example the only road to true greatness. It is the common suffrage of the race, that no one can be truly great without this disinterested love, and that, however great a man may seem, selfishness always removes his crown and his throne. Florence Nightingale, Miss Dix, John Howard, are examples. — *P*. **Give his life a ransom.** A ransom is a price of deliverance. He looked upon men as captives, and he by his life paid the price for their salvation. In this, as well as in numberless other passages of the New Testament, it is as plain as words can make any thing, that the death of Christ is proposed to us as our sacrifice and reconciliation, our atonement and redemption. It is not possible for any one who considers these expressions to imagine that Christ's death was only a confirmation of his gospel, a pattern of a holy and patient suffering of death, and a clear proof of a resurrection. — *Burnett*. This tender rebuke of their ambition bases the cardinal grace of humility upon the cardinal doctrine of the atonement. — *Schaff*. **For many.** The ransom is offered for all (1 Tim. 2 : 6). It is efficacious for the many who accept it, the great multitude, which no man could number. — *Abbott*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Ye know not what ye ask. Many of our prayers for worldly good are like a child crying for the moon. It seems like a pretty plaything in the sky. But the child knows not what it asks, for the moon would crush it to death. — *P*.

II. The motto on the coat of arms of the Prince of Wales is "Ich dien," *I serve*, — a most princely motto. The false king seeks the throne that all the kingdom may minister to him : the true king sits on the throne to minister to all the kingdom. To have all the rays of joy centre in us as a focus, — that is fire, the heart of sin ; to be the centre from which rays emanate to all, — that is the sun, the heart of heaven. — *P*.

III. Leigh Hunt's beautiful poem, *Abou Ben Adhem*, is a good illustration, in which the name of him who loved his fellow-men was written above all others. So Longfellow's legend, "Beautiful," in the *Wayside Inn*, teaches the same truth by the vision of Christ to the monk, remaining only because he went about his mission of charity. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 32. The truest heroism is in going forward in the path of duty in the face of dangers and death.

2. Christ does not ask us to go where he himself has not led the way.

3. Christ prepares us beforehand for the trials we have to go through.

4. Vers. 35-37. Christian parents should not seek too lofty things for their children. — *Cramer*.

5. One of our greatest dangers is the seeking great things for ourselves.

6. There is often a mingling of good and evil motives, desiring to be near Christ, and desiring pre-eminence.

7. Ver. 38. We know so little of the future that our wisest prayer is, "Thy will be done."

8. Ver. 41. Envy and jealousy are as evil as the ambitions and the pride which call them out.

9. Ver. 42-44. The only true ambition is that which seeks to give most and help most.

10. The desire for honor and place and power is ruinous to Christian character and the Christian Church.

11. That Power above, who makes mankind his care,
May bless us most when he rejects our prayer !

12. Christ has set us an example of the only way to true greatness.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

TRUE AND FALSE GREATNESS are here illustrated by examples, and explained by teaching. (1) *Christ is an example of true greatness* (vers. 32-34), going forward in the path of duty, though he saw suffering and death in the way. (2) James and John give *an example of the false idea of greatness* (vers. 35-41). (3) Jesus instructs the disciples in *the nature of true greatness* (vers. 42-46); and (4) he *illustrates it by his own life* (ver. 45).

LESSON IV. — JULY 23.

BLIND BARTIMEUS. — MARK 10:46-52.

GOLDEN TEXT. — The eyes of the blind shall be opened. — ISA. 35:5.

TIME. — March, A. D. 30.

PLACE. — Jericho, situated about 15 or 20 miles north-east of Jerusalem, five miles west of the Jordan, and six or seven north of the Dead Sea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 20:29-34. Luke 18:35-43; 19:1.

INTRODUCTION.

As in our last lesson, our Lord is still on his way to Jerusalem, proceeding down the valley of the Jordan, in company with the increasing crowd of pilgrims, to the feast of the Passover. He has recrossed the Jordan at the fords opposite Jericho, and reached that city. Here he heals Bartimeus and another blind man.

46. ¶ ¹ And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging.

And they come to Jericho: 46 and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way

¹ Matt. 20:29. Luke 18:35.

EXPLANATORY.

There are three apparently discordant accounts of this miracle in the three Gospels. Matthew says there were two blind men; Mark and Luke represent but one. Matthew and Mark say that the miracle was performed on Christ's departure from Jericho; Luke, as he came nigh (i.e., in the vicinity of) Jericho. As to *the number*, Archbishop Trench remarks, "The silence of one narrator is not to be assumed as the contradiction of the statement of another; thus Mark and Luke, making especial mention of one blind man, do not contradict Matthew, who mentions two." The interpretation that seems most reasonable, and is most generally accepted, is, that there were two blind men; Mark making special mention of but one, because he was well known, — Bartimeus *the* blind man. As to the difficulty concerning *the place*, Bengel's explanation, which is accepted by Trench and others, may be sufficient; namely, "that one cried to him as he drew near the city, but that he did not cure him then, but, on the morrow, at his going out of the city, cured him together with the other, to whom in the meanwhile he had joined himself." — *W.* The simplest explanation is, that Luke means, by "nigh," merely *in the neighborhood* of Jericho, without any regard to whether it was when he entered or left the city. — *P.* These difficulties we may dismiss. The particular spot is of no consequence; and, if there were two blind men, there certainly was one. Our attention is to be fixed on this one, Bartimeus. — *Dean Howson.*

46. **They came.** Jesus and his disciples. As they were pursuing the journey which is related in this chapter. — *Clark.* **To Jericho.** This was a city 15 or 20 miles from Jerusalem, to the north-east, and about five or seven miles from the Jordan, and next in importance to Jerusalem. The district was a blooming oasis in the midst of an extended sandy plain, watered and fruitful, rich in palms, roses, and balsams; hence the name, "the fragrant city." Built by the Canaanites, and destroyed by Joshua, it was rebuilt and fortified at a later day, and became a seat of a school of the prophets. Herod the Great beautified it, and it was the most luxuriant spot in Palestine. In the twelfth century scarcely a vestige of the place remained. There is now on the site a wretched village with

47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

side. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have

about 200 inhabitants. Sloping gently upwards from the level of the Dead Sea, 1,350 feet under the Mediterranean, it had the climate of Lower Egypt, and displayed the vegetation of the tropics. While snow is falling at Jerusalem, thin clothing is comfortable in Jericho. — *Schaff*. It was a favored and favorite city of antiquity. The income of its palm and balsam was thought by Antony to be a present worthy of being conferred on his royal mistress Cleopatra. — *Abbott*. Only a single palm-tree now remains in the City of Palms. — *Robinson*. Great number of people. Jericho would be full of people who were going up to attend the Passover. The number would be greatly increased by those coming



BLIND BEGGARS.

from Galilee by the way of Perea, to avoid passing through Samaria. — *Clark*. Blind. Ophthalmia is fearfully prevalent, especially among children, in the East, and goes on unchecked, in many or most instances, to its worst results. It would be no exaggeration to say, that one adult out of every five has his eyes more or less damaged by the consequences of this disease. — *W. G. Palgrave*. Bartimeus, son of Timeus. His being mentioned by name implies that he was well known. His father, too, would appear to have been noted for some

reason or other. Perhaps they both became ultimately attached to the cause of the Saviour and the fellowship of the disciples. — *Morison*. Bar is the Aramaic word for *son*, Timeus being the name of the father. Sat by the wayside begging. Both beggary and blindness are much more common in the East than with us, — the former owing to unjust taxation, uneven distribution of wealth, and the total absence of public and systematized charities; the latter owing to lack of cleanliness, and to exposure to an almost tropical sun, and to burning sands. — *Abbott*. He chose his place skillfully, near a populous city, and where the streams of pilgrims were flowing to and from Jerusalem. All of us are blind by nature; all of us are by the highway side, exposed to the noise, the publicity, the temptation, the weariness, the sorrow, of this life; sitting, too, as seeking rest in the world. Oh, may we beg of Jesus to grant us deliverance! for, though he knows all our wants, yet will he know them from ourselves. — *J. Ford*. Physical blindness may be turned to good account: but moral blindness is criminal; it is bad in itself, bad in all its issues, essentially and forever bad. — *Genius of the Gospel*.

47. Jesus of Nazareth. A designation never used by the Evangelist, save in recording the words of others. — *Cook*. He was familiarly, and also contemptuously, known as the Nazarene, — inhabitant of Nazareth. — *Clark*. He had heard of him before, — heard of healings wrought by him, of blind eyes opened, of dead men raised. It had never crossed his thoughts that he and this Jesus should meet, when now they tell him that he is near at hand. He can do that for him which none but he can do. It is his one and only chance. — *Hanna*. I proclaim that Jesus who walks up and down the ways of life; who passes every whither; who, in all his passage, is going about to relieve, to release, to restore; whose mission it is to give sight to the blind, to give hearing to the deaf, to give the dead hearts life. — *H. W. Beecher*. He began. Immediately, as soon as he heard this, and continued so to do until he gained his end. — *Alexander*. To cry out. For God loves to be entreated, he loves to be compelled, he loves to be even vanquished by our persevering importunity. — *St. Gregory*. Jesus, thou Son of David. He therefore believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of David; i.e., the expected Messiah. — *Lange*. The cry of

48. And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise ; he calleth thee.

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these blind men was a recognition of Christ's dignity as the Messiah ; for this name, "*Son of David*," was the popular designation of the Messiah. There was, therefore, upon their part a double confession of faith, — first, that he could heal them ; and, secondly, not merely as a prophet from God, but as *the* Prophet, as the one who should come, according to the words of Isaiah (see Golden Text), to give sight to the blind. — *Trench.* Bartimeus was blind in body, but not in soul. The eyes of his understanding were opened. He saw things which Annas and Caiaphas, and hosts of letter-learned scribes and Pharisees, never saw at all. He saw that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of David, the Messiah of whom prophets had prophesied long ago. — *Ryle.* There was but *one* in the dense crowd they thought of, and that was the Son of David ; and to him alone they appealed. In this way every inquiring soul should act. Do not dally with intermediate objects. Heed not the crowd : there is not one amongst the millions can save you but Christ. Through the teeming multitudes that crowd God's universe, cry out to him *so as to be heard.* — *Thomas.* **Have mercy on me.** The emphasis naturally falls on the word "*me*," for Bartimeus, hearing "that it was Jesus," and knowing his own disadvantage from his blindness in the crowd, fears *he* may be overlooked. — *O. E. Daggett.*

48. **Many** (not the disciples) **charged** him. Not because he called Jesus the Son of David, but (1) because he presumed to intrude a private grief upon the King of Israel, when, as they supposed, he was going in triumph to Jerusalem to assume his throne and deliver the nation. The spirit of this rebuke is exactly the same as that of Matthew (19 : 13). — *Abbott.* (2) Perhaps from selfishness, not wishing to have the Lord's attention called away from their instruction. — *Biblical Museum.* (3) From indifference to others' needs. — *Roberts.* (4) They thought they were pleasing the Master in defending him from a beggar. When a man is in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes may be opened, that he may walk in his light who is the Light of men, when he begins to despise the world and to be careless about riches, he will find infinite hinderances, and these not from professed enemies of the gospel of Christ, but from such as seem, like this multitude, to be with Jesus and on his side. Even they will try to stop his mouth, and to hinder an earnest crying to him. — *Trench.* He who easily yields his point to threats is, for the most part, without the strong urgency of a true heart. — *Reiger.* **Cried the more a great deal.** They were not to be silenced, and the litanies of Christendom for centuries have been modelled on the *Kyrie Eleison* (Lord have mercy on us) which came from their lips. — *Plumptre.* Methinks we hear his shout. There would be the very strength and might and blood and sinew of that man's life cast into it ; he would be like Jacob wrestling with the angel, and every word would be a hand to grasp him that he might not go. The gate of heaven is to be opened only in one way, by the very earnest use of the knocker of prayer. — *Spurgeon.* **Thou Son of David.** He suffers himself now to be publicly appealed to as the Messiah in the presence of all the people, which he had never done before. The time for his acceptance of, and sympathy with, the Messianic hope of his people had now arrived. — *Lange.* It was a great act of *faith* in this blind man to call him *the Son of David*, whom the people pointed out as being **JESUS OF NAZARETH.** — *Bengel.* **Have mercy on me.** This is prayer. There is no preamble, no vague utterance, no redundancy of expression in real prayer. Much of what is called prayer in these modern times is nothing but a weak and windy string of sentences. — *Thomas.* Jesus was passing by — would soon be past — might never pass that way again. It was a *short* opportunity : it seemed likely it would be the only one. — *Tyng.* The preaching of the gospel is a perpetual announcement that Jesus is near. — *Luther.* And Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. It is but a single day we have for meeting with him, — that short day of life, the twelve hours of which are so swiftly running out. Let us be as earnest to see him as Bartimeus, as careless of what others say or do, as resolute to overcome all difficulties ; and we shall find he will be as ready to hear, to heal, to come to us. — *Hanna.*

49. **Jesus stood still.** He who moves the universe is held by the prayer of this man. — *Thomas.* The blind beggar is to him as the rich ruler. Did he not come and die for both ? — *Stock.* **And commanded.** This is a reproof of the reprovers. — *Schaff.* **To be called.** Making those help who had hindered. They call the blind man. Nothing could be more natural than the sudden change which is effected in the conduct of the mul-

50. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; ¹ thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

thee. And he, casting away 50 his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus. And Jesus 51 answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabbi, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go 52 thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way.

¹ Matt. 9 : 22. Mark 5 : 34.

titude, as soon as they observe the favorable disposition of Jesus. — *Godet*. When a Christian first enters upon a religious life, and begins to be zealous in good works, and to despise the world, he finds many lukewarm Christians who are ready to blame and to oppose him; but should he persevere, and overcome them by continuance in well-doing, these same persons will take his part. As long as they entertain the least hope of gaining their point, they molest us, and find fault; but, when they are outdone by our resolute determination, they change sides, and exclaim, "This is really a great man, a blessed man, to receive such grace from God!" — *St. Augustine*. He calleth thee. The call of Christ is always full of cheer, — always, too, a call to do something as a token of trust in him. — *Abbott*.

50. Casting away his garment; i.e., his outer garment. This was his cloak, or mantle; which is often used by the poor at night for a covering, and which the law of Moses gave them a special claim to, that it should not be kept from them over-night when it was given as a pledge. — *Jacobus*. The outside garment hindered his speed, could be spared, and is therefore thrown aside. In dead earnest is he, and can brook no delay. — *Rose*. (New Version, *sprang*.) As the blind Bartimeus threw off his "garments," so sinners should throw away every thing that hinders their going to him, — every thing that obstructs their progress, — and cast themselves at his feet. No man will be saved while sitting still. The command is, "Strive to enter in;" and the promise is made to those only who "ask" and "seek" and "knock." — *Barnes*. Came to Jesus. The blind man runs to Jesus without seeing him. So must we hasten to him in faith, though we see him not. — *Gossner*. He does not need to be told a second time: he does not wait for any guiding hands to lead him to the centre of the path. A few eager footsteps, he stands in the presence of the Lord! — *Hanna*.

51. What wilt thou that I should do? With a majesty truly royal, Jesus seems to open up to the beggar the treasure of divine power, and to give him, if we may so speak, *carte blanche*. — *Godet*. Jesus asks, not for information, but to draw from them an expression of their desire. The gift is of more value when given in answer to prayer. — *Binney*. Lord. Better, *Rabboni*, as in the Revised, the word being the same as in John 20 : 16, and occurring in these two passages only. The word was an augmentative form of Rabbi, and as such expressed greater reverence. — *Plumptre*. The gradations of honor were Rab, Rabbi, Rabban, Rabboni. — *Maclear*. That I might receive my sight. Not how or why, but the desire, which he believes the Lord can grant in the best way. — *Schaff*. The man, whose cry has been hitherto a vague, indeterminate cry for mercy, now singles out the blessing which he craves, designates the channel in which he desires that this mercy should run. — *Trench*. No prayer ever reaches God's heart that does not come from our hearts. — *Spurgeon*. He who would see must acknowledge his blindness. — *Hedinger*. Blindness of heart is the only blindness of which men seldom complain, and from which they scarcely ever beg to be delivered. It is one part of this blindness not to perceive it, and to think that our sight is good. — *Quenel*. So Seneca tells of a blind woman who insisted that the trouble was not with her eyes, but in the absence of light from the room.

52. Go thy way. Matthew states that he touched his eyes. Other blind men had called him the Son of David, but he had straitly charged them not to make him known. No such charge is given to Bartimeus. He is permitted to follow him, and glorify God as loudly, as amply as he can (Luke 18 : 43). As the time draws near, all the reasons for that reserve which Jesus had previously studied are removed. — *Hanna*. Thy faith hath made thee whole. It was the confidence which the blind man cherished in the ability and benevolence of Jesus that induced him to seek aid from Jesus, and that induced him to persevere while the crowd sought to restrain him. Such confidence Jesus delighted to acknowledge and to honor. — *Ripley*. Beyond this there lies in the word "faith" a reference to the salvation, the healthiness of spiritual vision, of which the restoration of bodily sight was at once the type and the earnest. — *Ellicott*. The faith of this man was great; because, being blind, he could not see the miracles which Jesus did. "Faith came" to him "by

hearing." He believed on the testimony and report of others; and so he inherited, in a manner, the promise of the Lord his Saviour, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). — *J. Ford*. The cure of a man depended upon no uncertain or arbitrary movement of the feelings of Jesus. He was always ready to heal. No one was ever refused who asked him. It rested with the man: the healing could not have its way and enter in, save the man would open his door. Hence the question, and the praise of the patient's faith. — *MacDonald*. *Made thee whole*. Complete, sound, nothing wanting. A sinner is never *whole*; never a complete, perfect man. Christ makes us *whole*. And followed Jesus. Glorifying God, as Luke adds (18:43), and joining the festal company of his Healer, who all likewise gave praise unto God for the miracle which they had witnessed (compare Acts 3:8-10). Thus, as our Lord journeyed toward Jerusalem, he gathered in his train fresh monuments of his power. The march of earthly conquerors is tracked with blood: smoking villages and mangled corpses mark the way which they had trodden, while weeping captives are chained to their triumphal chariots. But the Saviour left joy behind him wherever he went, and collected new trophies of his mercy. — *Tyng*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The people hindering Bartimeus. If the Queen came in royal procession through our neighborhood, amid great crowds, and a beggar cried after her, would she take any notice? and what would the by-standers do? Would it be unkind to stop the disturbance? Not at all; for how could the Queen attend to everybody? — *Eugene Stock*.

II. Blindness as a type of the sinner's condition. Blind to his best good, to God's goodness and love, to Jesus, to the Bible, to heaven. He is blind and a beggar, needing help from others as Bartimeus. Blind, and grinding in the mill like Samson among the Philistines.

III. The blind eyes opened. I have recently read of a young lady, twenty-five years of age, who had been blind from birth. For twenty-five years she had lived in midnight darkness. A successful operation was performed, and sight was restored. On a lovely, pure morning, the window-blinds were thrown open, and she was allowed to look out, for the first time in her life, upon the wondrous workmanship of God's hand. She nearly fainted from excess of rapture. Tears of more than earthly delight gushed from those eyes which had so long been sightless. "Oh, wonderful, wonderful!" she exclaimed; "heaven surely cannot surpass this." And thus shall it be with you, O happy, happy disciple of Jesus, when entering in at the golden gates, the splendors of the celestial paradise shall be opened to your view! — *Congregationalist*.

IV. Saved by faith. Faith is like opening the blinds of the house to let in the sunshine that is waiting to enter; like opening the door to receive the guest who is knocking; like the coupler that joins the car to the engine that so it may use its power; like the desire for learning that makes the world of literature our own.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 46. Sinners are blind to their own interests, to God, heaven, spiritual life.
2. They are not only blind, but beggars, unable to cure themselves, needing help from God and man.
3. Ver. 47. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Unless we go to him now, it may be too late.
4. Our only plea for help is the mercy of God.
5. Ver. 48. We should be very careful not to hinder those who would come to Jesus.
6. We should never stop in our going to Jesus because others oppose our going.
7. Ver. 49. Jesus is ten thousand times more earnest and willing to give you spiritual sight than ever he was to give Bartimeus physical sight.
8. Those that hinder at first will often change to helpers if we persevere.
9. Ver. 50. We should cast aside every thing that hinders us from going to Jesus, even though it may not be evil in itself.

10. Ver. 52. Bartimeus' faith was shown, (1) by his going to Jesus; (2) by his perception that Jesus was the Messiah; (3) by persevering against opposition; (4) by casting away all that hindered; (5) by obeying Jesus when he was called; (6) by following and praising him after he was cured.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Here we have A TYPE OF THE SINNER AND HIS CURE. I. *The blind beggar a type of the sinner* (ver. 46). *He is blind and in want.* (For blindness, see Illustrative, II.) He is poor in spiritual life, in God, in happiness, in hope. II. *Inquiries for help* (vers. 47, 48). (1) To the right being; (2) at the right time; (3) for the right blessing; (4) in the right spirit, persevering against all obstacles. III. *Jesus the Saviour, through faith in his name* (vers. 49-52). How Jesus cured him. How faith made him whole. Five proofs of faith that he showed. How we are saved by faith; and that salvation makes us *whole*, entire, complete.

LESSON V. — JULY 30.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. — MARK II: I-II.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee.* — ZECH. 9:9.

TIME. — A. D. 30. Sunday, 2d April, 10th Nisan (Palm Sunday), four days before the great Jewish Passover. It was the first of their secular days after the Jewish sabbath had ended.

PLACE. — (1) Bethany. (2) The main road from Bethany to Jerusalem. (3) Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 21: 1-11. Luke 19: 29-44. John 12: 12-19.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Many interesting events transpired between the last lesson and this, not mentioned by Mark. The following is their probable order: (1) Our Lord, after giving sight to Bartimeus, converts Zaccheus, and is entertained by him in Jericho (Luke 19: 1-10), where he remains during the night. (2) In the morning he speaks to the people the parable of the pounds (Luke 19: 11-28). (3) He leaves Jericho, and apparently reached Bethany on the evening of Friday, March 31, Nisan 8. There (4) in quiet retirement he spent his last earthly sabbath (our Saturday, April 1); and (5) in the evening, the sabbath being over at sunset, he sat down to a festal meal provided by the sisters of Lazarus at the house of one Simon, who had been a leper (Matt. 26: 6; John 12: 2). (6) At this feast he was anointed by Mary (John 12: 3); and (7) during the night a council of the Jews was convened to consider the propriety of putting, not him only, but Lazarus also, to death (John 12: 10). — *Maclear.*

INTRODUCTION.

Jesus of Nazareth had now, for three years, assumed the character of a public teacher. All considered him an extraordinary being; but whether he was the Messiah still hung in the balance. And now the Passover rapidly approached. The roads from all quarters were crowded with the assembling worshippers. Not only the great mass of the inhabitants of Palestine, but many foreign Jews thronged from every quarter, — from Babylon, Arabia, Egypt, from Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, probably even from Gaul and Spain. — *Milman.* The question uppermost in the minds of them all was, "Can this Nazarene be the Messiah?" Our lesson opens with the first day of Christ's last week of earthly life.

1. And¹ when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

And when they draw nigh¹ unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith²

¹ Matt. 21: 1. Luke 19: 29. John 12: 14.

EXPLANATORY.

1. And when they came nigh to Jerusalem. Luke says, ascended up to Jerusalem, because Jericho is 3,000 feet lower than Jerusalem. — *Abbott.* A journey of about 18

2. And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you : and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat ; loose him, and bring *him*.

unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you : and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat ; loose him, and

miles up the rugged ravine that leads from Jericho to Jerusalem. — *Plumptre*. As the Passover, with its sacrifices, was just at hand, companies of pilgrims, driving sheep for the altar, would be seen in the highways, all gathering up from the four quarters to the centre of the nation's faith. Among them goes the Lamb of God — the one sacrifice — final, perfect, and sufficient, whom these typical altars of thousands of years had heralded with their banners of smoke and flame. — *F. D. Huntington*. Came nigh. There were three paths over the Mount of Olives, — (1) on the north, in the hollow between the two crests of the hill ; next (2) over the summit ; and (3) on the south, between the Mount of Olives and the Hill of Offence, — still the most frequented and the best. Along this Jesus advanced. — *Geikie*. Unto Bethphage (House of Figs) and Bethany (House of Dates). Situated two miles east of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is mentioned first, though it was remotest ; for it was the Grand Terminus. Bethphage and Bethany were suburban villages near to one another, and lying on the direct line of road that led to Jerusalem from the east. They were on the east side of the Mount of Olives, which was on the east side of the holy city. — *Morison*. Of Bethphage no trace has been discovered. Bethany has continued, beyond question. On the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, screened from sight of Jerusalem by the crest of the hill, stands the little mountain hamlet, containing little more than twenty houses, scattered irregularly in a labyrinth of narrow lanes and ruinous walls, — a shrivelled and decaying place. — *H. B. Tristram*. Still called El Azarieh, from Lazarus, whose home it was. Mount of Olives. A hill just east of Jerusalem, so called from the olive-trees upon it. It was about a mile from the city. It was their open ground, — for pleasure, for worship ; the "Park" of Jerusalem ; the thoroughfare of any going or coming in the direction of the great Jordan valley. — *Stanley*. Sendeth forth two of his disciples. The sending of the two disciples proves the deliberate intention of Jesus to give a certain solemnity to the scene. Till then he had withdrawn from popular expressions of homage ; but once, at least, he wished to show himself as King Messiah of his people. It was a last call addressed by him to the population of Jerusalem. This course, besides, could no longer compromise his work. He knew that in any case death awaited him in the capital. — *Godet*. He would have a public testimony to the fact that it was their King the Jews crucified. It is not merely the Messiah that saves, nor the crucified One that saves, but the Messiah crucified (1 Cor. 1: 23). An analogous commission to prepare the Passover was given to Peter and John (Luke 22: 8). They may have been the two sent forth. — *Abbott*.

2. Into the village over against you. Leaving Bethany on foot, attended by his disciples and others, he comes to the place where the neighboring village of Bethphage is in view, over against them, perhaps separated from them by a valley. To this village he probably sent his disciples. — *Andrews*. Ye shall find a colt tied. In the East the ass is in high esteem. Stalier, livelier, swifter than with us, it vies with the horse in favor. In contrast to the horse, which had been introduced by Solomon from Egypt, and was used especially for war, it was the symbol of peace. To the Jew it was peculiarly national. For had not Moses led his wife, seated on an ass, to Egypt? had not the Judges ridden on white asses? Every Jew, moreover, expected, from the words of one of the prophets (Zech. 9: 9), that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. No act could be more perfectly in keeping with the conception of a king of Israel. — *Geikie*. His lot varies as does the lot of those he serves. The rich man's ass is a lordly beast. In size he is far ahead of any thing of this kind we see here at home. His coat is as smooth and glossy as a horse's. His livery is shiny black, satiny white, or sleek mouse color. — *Zincke's Egypt*. Whereon never man sat. The fact is mentioned by St. Mark and St. Luke only (19: 30). It was probably, in their eyes, significant, as showing that he who used the colt did so in his own right, and not as filling a place which others had filled before him. — *Plumptre*. The superhuman knowledge of Jesus was in this simple way shown to the apostles. He could see what they could not of the present, and knew what they did not of the future. — *Godwin*. Animals not previously used for labor were accounted specially pure and fit for sacred services. Hence only oxen unused to the yoke were offered on the altar. This serves to explain why a beast was on this occasion chosen "whereon yet never man sat." — *Kitto*. Matthew speaks of the *she-ass* and the *colt* together, to show that it was a colt which yet went with its mother, — so fulfilling the Scripture, that it was one "upon which never man sat." — *Jacobus*. Our Lord's birth, triumph, and burial were to be in this alike. — *Alford*.

3. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways meet; and they loose him.

5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6. And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him: and he sat upon him.

bring him. And if any one 3 say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither. And they went away, 4 and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they 6 said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go. And they bring the colt 7 unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat

3. The Lord hath need of him. *The Lord* here may be either equivalent to Jehovah or to Jesus Christ. In the former case the language is equivalent to, "He is needed for the service of God." We shall then understand that the owner was simply a godly man, and that, acting under a divine impulse, he allowed these strangers to take his animal for a service of God, the nature of which he did not understand. If we give the latter interpretation, we must assume that the owner of the ass and colt was a disciple of Jesus Christ, and that he recognized in this reply a message from his Lord, and yielded to it. This seems to me the more probable hypothesis. In either case the moral lesson is the same. Whoever brings the message, "The Lord hath need," we are to respond, if satisfied that it comes from him. — *Abbott*. The disciples were to loose the asses, which stood bound by the way, before the eyes of the standers-by; thus, believing in the words of Jesus, they were to perform an act which seemed violent, but was not so, inasmuch as the Lord knew beforehand the consent of the owners. — *Lange*. The term "Lord" shows the feeling of sovereignty with which Jesus acted. — *Godet*. And straightway he will send him hither; or, in the New Version, *straightway he (Jesus) will send him back hither*. The New Version gives the true meaning. The idea is not, as commonly understood, that the owners will at once give up the animal, but a promise that the Lord would, without delay, return the animal. — *Morison*.

4. Found the colt . . . where two ways met. (Or New Version, *at the door without in the open street*.) As this was an inconsiderable hamlet, which had probably but one street, it seems better to explain the term as meaning the highway on which the village stood. — *Alexander*.

5. Certain of them. The owner, or members of his household.

6. And they let them go. All was the carrying out of an eternal plan that an old prophet saw 600 years before. — *Thomas*.

7. They brought the colt to Jesus. It is the colt, the one upon which no man yet had sat, that Jesus chooses. And cast their garments on him. In substituting their garments for the cover which it would have been so easy to procure, the disciples wished to pay homage to Jesus. — *Godet*. This was the custom of the people, as an acknowledgment of an appointed king. — *Jacobus*. The outside of this triumph was very mean. He rode upon an ass's colt, which made no figure. This colt was borrowed. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the Passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass. He had no rich trappings, but only the garments of others. — *Matthew Henry*. And he sat upon him. From the moment that Jesus seats himself on the colt he becomes the visible centre of the assemblage, and the scene takes a character more and more extraordinary. It is as if a breathing from above had all at once taken possession of this multitude. — *Godet*. Each of the four evangelists goes back to the prophecy (Zech. 9:9) as fulfilled in this remarkable event, — the only known instance in which Jesus ever rode upon any animal. — *Cowles*. Hitherto he had entered the holy city on foot: this day he would enter as David and the judges of Israel were wont, — riding on the specially Jewish ass. — *Geikie*. He mounted, that he might enter the holy city with all the significance of a triumph. He would not enter it, indeed, like a haughty warrior on his steed. He was the Prince of peace. Neither would he enter it in a bedazzlement of purple and pomp and pageantry. He was the meek and lowly One. And yet he was a Conqueror and a King. All the ideas that were incarnated in his career, and emblazoned in his final sufferings and death and resurrection, are destined to be triumphant. — *Morison*.

8. And many. Josephus estimates the numbers present on a Passover occasion at

8. ¹And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

9. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, ²Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10. Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: ³Hosanna in the highest.

upon him. And many spread ⁸ their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields. And they that went before, ⁹ and they that followed, cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed *is* the kingdom ¹⁰ that cometh, *the kingdom* of our father David: Hosanna in the highest.

¹ Matt. 21: 8. ² Ps. 118: 26. ³ Ps. 148: 1.

about three millions, little short of half the population of the two provinces. — *Hanna*. Spread their garments in the way; i.e., their “abbas” or “hykés,” the loose blanket or cloak worn over the tunic or shirt. Those that take Christ must lay their all under his feet. — *Henry*. Cut down branches. John says, of palm-trees (12: 13). The Revised says, *which they had cut from the fields*. This, which is the more correct expression, shows that those who did not spread their clothes in the way, went off from the highway, in their zeal, to obtain a substitute. The “branches of palm-trees” are not strictly, branches at all, but the enormous leaves, twelve to sixteen feet long, which spring from the top of the tall, straight trunk. A few palm-trees are still to be seen in Jerusalem. — *Stock*. Combining the four accounts, we get the following features: Some took off their outer garments, the burnoose, and bound it on the colt as a kind of saddle; others cast their garments in the way, a mark of honor to a king (2 Kings 9: 13); others climbed the trees, cut down the branches, and strewed them in the way (Matt. 21: 8); others gathered leaves and twigs and rushes. This procession was made up largely of Galileans; but the reputation of Christ, increased by the resurrection of Lazarus, had preceded him, and many came out from the city to swell the acclamations and increase the enthusiasm. — *Abbott*.

9. That went before and . . . that followed. Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and, as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the south-eastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upward toward Bethany with shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there the previous night. The two streams met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded: the other half followed. Gradually the long procession swept up and over the ridge where first begins “the descent of the Mount of Olives” towards Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the south-eastern corner of the city. The temple and the more northern portions are hid by the slope of Olivet on the right: what is seen is only Mount Zion. It was at this point, “as he drew near, at the descent of Mount Olives,” that the shout of triumph burst forth from the multitude. — *Stanley*. Hosanna. A Greek modification of the Hebrew words, “Save now, I beseech thee,” in Ps. 118: 25, the next verse of which formed part of their song, “Blessed,” etc. It is used as an expression of praise, like hallelujah. The faith of the holy Jews under the law, and of the holy Gentiles under the gospel, was one and the same. They that *went before* Christ in the one, and they that *followed* Christ in the other, did both cry, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” did both obtain salvation by the same Saviour, and by the same way (Eph. 2: 18). — *Light-foot*. That cometh in the name of the Lord. The words are taken in part from Ps. 118: 25, 26, a hymn which belonged to the great hallelujah chanted at the end of the Paschal Supper and the Feast of Tabernacles. The people were accustomed to apply it to the Messiah. — *Godet*. Christ came in the name of the Lord, because sent and appointed by the Lord, — his ambassador, proclaiming the message of the Lord.

10. Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh. (Better as in the Revised.) This recognizes clearly that Christ's kingdom is the continuation of the old kingdom of God's people, whose future glories are prophesied so often in the Old Testament. Hosanna in the highest. In the highest degree, in the highest strains, in the highest heavens. This very multitude, so eager to-day to exalt Christ in loud hosannas, are as fair on Friday to exalt him to the cross by their loud cryings of “Crucify him.” — *Mark Frank*. The whole enthusiasm of the multitude at the end is nothing more than the last upstreaming brilliancy of an evening sun, before it vanishes beneath the horizon. The entry itself is in turn the prophecy of his return in glory, when he, surrounded by his many thousands of saints, whose hosannas have then become a hallelujah, shall descend from heaven upon earth. — *Lange*.

II. ¹And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out into Bethany with the twelve.

And he entered into Jerusalem, into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

¹ Matt 21: 12.

As they reach the summit of the Mount of Olives the glories of Jerusalem in all its splendor burst upon his view. Here, according to Luke (19: 41), though others shouted, his own soul was full of sorrow, and he wept over the city. (1) On account of their sins; (2) because of the sorrows and desolation that were to come upon it. "He was crossing the ground on which, a generation later, the tenth Roman legion would be encamped, as part of the besieging force destined to lay all the splendor before him in ashes." Even in the midst of our rejoicing over the triumphs of Christianity, we should weep over those who will not come and be saved. — *P.*

II. Entered into Jerusalem. It was hereafter never possible to say that he had never declared himself in a wholly unequivocal manner. When Jerusalem afterwards was accused of the murder of the Messiah, she could not say that he had omitted to give an intelligible sign to all alike. — *Lange*. Into the temple. Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb, thus presented himself, as was required by the law, that the victim to be offered should be set apart four days before the great day of atonement. — *Mimpriss*. He went to the Temple that the prophecy might be fulfilled (Mal. 3: 1-3). — *M. Henry*. And had looked round about. This was not done through vain curiosity, but in order to ascertain by personal inspection what abuses had crept into the Temple worship, and what portions of the sacred house and its courts had been profaned by money-changers and others of similar stamp. — *Owen*. It was an act by which he took possession, as it were, of his Father's house, and claimed dominion over it, — an attitude maintained by him throughout this final visit to the holy city. — *Alexander*. On the Monday and Tuesday preceding his Good Friday and Easter, our Lord went to the Temple. Learn from this what is the best preparation for the pains of death, and also for the joy and glory of the resurrection from the dead. — *J. Ford*. And now the eventide was come. The word "eventide" is somewhat indefinite; but it included the two or three hours before sunset, as well as after. The procession, if it started in the morning, had probably been delayed by frequent halts; and its movements through such a dense crowd must have been but slow. — *Plumptre*. He went out. The day's work is completed with the Messianic entry itself; and only a visit to the Temple, and a significant look round about it, form the close. What the Messiah has still further to do (the cleansing of the Temple, etc.) follows on the morrow. — *Meyer*. To Bethany. Where he spent the nights of this eventful week.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Spreading garments in the way. When the people of Bethlehem, during the war between Turkey and Egypt in 1836, sought the protection of the British consul, they "spread their garments in the way" of his horses, in order to do him honor. — *Robinson's Biblical Researches*. A sign of honor still shown to great persons in the East. A noble carpeted all the way when a Persian king visited him, "besides the garments which loyal persons in the crowd spread here and there." On another occasion seven miles of road were covered with superb silk cloths, over which the king, and a prince whom he wished to honor, rode. — *Biblical Museum*.

II. Celebration of triumph. In September, A. D. 61, about 30 years after Christ's triumphal entry, the most magnificent triumph ever seen in Rome was given to Pompey. For two days the grand procession of trophies from every land, and a long retinue of captives, moved into the city along the Via Sacra. Brazen tablets were carried, on which were engraved the names of the conquered nations, including 1,000 castles and 900 cities. The remarkable circumstance of the celebration was, that it declared him conqueror of the whole world. So the triumphant procession of Christ into Jerusalem was

but a faint shadow of the coming of the Prince of peace, when all nations and the wealth and glory of them shall take part in his glorious triumph. And the day is fast approaching. — *After Foster's Cyclopadia, III.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Christ, though disguised and poor, is yet King of this world.
2. But he is a Prince of peace, and his victories are by the weapons of peace.
3. Ver. 2. Christ knows the hearts of men.
4. Ver. 3. Jesus was careful to return whatever he borrowed.
5. Whatever the Lord has need of we should gladly give to his service.
6. The Lord has need of the humblest of his creatures.
7. Vers. 8-10. Let us show all honor to Jesus as King, by word and deed.
8. Ver. 9. Blessed is every one who comes in the name of the Lord.
9. Ver. 10. Blessed are all that belong to the kingdom of Christ.
10. Christ inspires the religious feelings with gladness.
11. Christ encourages the expression of religious feeling.
12. Even in the midst of the triumph, there are sins and sorrows to weep over.
13. Christ is yet to come triumphant over all.
14. The triumph is to be by the arts of peace, not of war.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson brings before us CHRIST AS OUR KING. (1) We see *the triumphal procession* (vers. 1-8), with its various incidents. Picture out the scene; the route of the procession; the great multitudes. Explain, that, though it took place on our Sunday, it was not on the sabbath, but on the first of their week-days. Christ did not even go to Simon's feast till the sabbath had ended. (2) *Hosanna to the King* (vers. 9-11). Show how Jesus is our King; how we may express our homage; the final triumph of his kingdom; why it is blessed to belong to it; and why Jesus wept in the midst of the triumph.

LESSON VI. — AUGUST 6.

THE FRUITLESS TREE. — MARK 11:12-23.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* — JOHN: 15:8.

TIME. — April, A. D. 30. The cursing of the fig-tree and the cleansing of the Temple (vers. 12-19) occurred Monday morning, April 3 (11th Nisan). The disciples see the fig-tree withered (vers. 20-23) Tuesday morning, April 4 (12th Nisan).

PLACE. — The cursing of the barren fig-tree (vers. 12-14), on the way from Bethany (where Jesus had spent the night) to Jerusalem. The cleansing of the Temple (vers. 15-18) at Jerusalem. The astonishment of the disciples at sight of the fig-tree already withered, and Christ's teaching concerning it (vers. 20-23), on the way from Bethany (where he had again spent the night, ver. 19) to Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — With vers. 12-14, Matt. 21:18, 19. With vers. 15-18, Matt. 21:12, 13, and Luke 19:45-48. With vers. 20-23, Matt. 21:20, 21.

INTRODUCTION.

After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Sunday, April 2 (their Monday), Jesus returned to Bethany to spend the night. Leaving Bethany early Monday morning with his disciples, he was hungry; and, beholding a fig-tree by the way which had no fruit, he pronounced a curse against it. Proceeding to the city, he enters the Temple, and purifies it. He heals there the blind and lame; and the children cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt. 21:14-17). His reproofs enrage the priests and scribes, who seek how to destroy him. In the evening he goes back to Bethany. Returning into the city with his disciples the next morning (Tuesday), they saw the fig-tree dried up from its roots; and this leads Jesus to speak to them respecting faith.

12. ¶ ¹ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry :

13. ² And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon : and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves ; for the time of figs was not yet.

And on the morrow, when 12 they were come out from Bethany, he hungered. And 13 seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon : and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves ; for it was not the season of

¹ Matt. 21 : 18. ² Matt. 21 : 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Barren Fig-Tree. — Vers. 12-14. **12. On the morrow.** Monday morning, the next day after his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. They were come. Christ and his twelve disciples, who went to Bethany with him. **Bethany.** Bethany was a small village on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, about one and a half or two miles east of Jerusalem, toward Jericho. It was the home of Mary and Martha, whither Jesus often went, and where he undoubtedly lodged at this time. **He was hungry.** Having probably partaken of no food that morning, either because they set out very early, or because the hunger was to bear a part in the following symbolical instruction. Though the hunger of our Lord alone is mentioned, it necessarily implies that of his followers. — *Alexander.* The fact is, that with the Orientals the breakfast hour is late in the forenoon ; and as our Lord's time waxed short, and he had important business to transact at Jerusalem, it was not to be supposed that he would remain at Bethany till after the breakfast hour. It was considered unbecoming to take the morning meal before the hour of morning sacrifice, which was at nine o'clock ; so that, taking all things into account, our Lord could not have reached Jerusalem till nearly eleven o'clock if he had tarried at Bethany for the earliest breakfast he could have had. — *Kitta.* It was real hunger. Hunger was a part of his humiliation. Thus he became perfect through sufferings, and able to sympathize with his followers in every trial. Some suppose that he had passed the night, in the open air, in solitude and prayer. — *Clark.*

13. Seeing a fig tree. — The little valley of Bethany was famous for dates and figs ; for the very name Bethany means "the place for dates," while Bethphage, which was near Bethany, is "the place for the green or winter fig." — *Geikie.* The fig was often planted by the waysides ; because the dust of the road was an absorbing counteraction to the strong flow of the sap, so hindering a too great development of leaves, and promoting its fruitfulness. It was a common and much esteemed article of food. Three kinds were distinguished : (1) The early fig (*bicura, boccore*), which bore large green-colored figs, and ripened in May or June, and in Jerusalem still earlier. — *Thompson.* (2) The summer fig (*kermus*), which ripened in August. (3) The winter fig (or later *kermus*), which came to maturity, only after the leaves were gone, and would hang through a mild winter into the spring. — *Lange.* **Having leaves.** It stood alone, a single fig-tree "by the wayside" (Matt. 21 : 19), and presented an unusual show of leaves for the season. — *Cambridge Bible.* It was a time when fig-trees in general would not be in leaf. But it sometimes happens that there is an exceptional precocity in a tree's foliage. There had been such precocity in the case before us. — *Morison.* I have plucked them in May from trees on Lebanon, 150 miles north of Jerusalem, and where the trees are nearly a month later. It does not, therefore, seem impossible but that the same kind might have had ripe figs at Easter in the warm, sheltered ravines of Olivet. — *Wm. M. Thompson.* **If haply.** If, as was reasonable to expect under such circumstances, fruit was to be found. **He might find any thing thereon.** He came to the fig-tree to see, by actual inspection, if any thing eatable was to be found. **When he came to it** (or, very literally, *upon it*, that is, *close upon it*), he found nothing but leaves. — *Morison.* Leaves were not merely a profession of fruit, but a proof that the tree had received all the sun, rain, and soil that were needful for bringing forth fruit ; as we receive the means of grace. Was Christ, with his divine character, ignorant of the fruitless condition of this tree ? If he was not ignorant of it, was his course in seeking fruit quite consistent with perfect sincerity and truth ? The first question is answered by Abbott as follows : " (1) It is not stated that he was ignorant of its fruitless character, or that he expected to find fruit upon it ; only that he went to it as if seeking for fruit. (2) He may, however, have been ignorant ; and this is implied, though not asserted, in this narrative. For it was a part of his voluntary humiliation to subject himself to all the ordinary conditions of humanity, and he did not use his divine knowledge except for the sake of others and in the execution of his divine mission." In this latter opinion very many commentators agree. But a much more natural and satis-

14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

figs. And he answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee hence forward for ever. And his disciples heard

factory answer to both questions seems to be that this whole incident was symbolical, — a parable in act, — and that there was not necessarily either ignorance or deceit implied in this action. As Trench says, "A parable is told *as* true; and, though the facts are feigned, it *is* true, because of the moral or spiritual truth which sustains the outward fabric of the story." The same is true of a parable in act. — *P.* Our Lord had already spoken the parable of the fig-tree that bore no fruit (Luke 13:6-9). Here he puts into visible form that which before he had embodied in words. — *MacDonald.* It was both a parable and a prophecy, — a parable teaching that false professors will be judged; a prophecy in its particular application to the Jews. — *Schaff.* The time of figs was not yet. Literally, *For it was not fig season.* This is an expression that has occasioned great perplexity. How could he, as a reasonable man, have expected fruit if "the time of figs was not yet"? — *Abbott.* The simplest, and, as it appears to me, the entirely satisfying explanation of this difficulty is the following: At that early period of the year, the first of April, neither leaves nor fruit were naturally to be looked for on a fig-tree, nor, in ordinary circumstances, would any one have sought them there. But that tree, by putting forth leaves, made pretension to be something more than others, to have fruit upon it, seeing that in the fig-tree the fruit appears before the leaves. This tree, so to speak, vaunted itself to be in advance of all the other trees, challenged the passer-by that he should come and refresh himself with its fruit. Yet when the Lord accepted its challenge, and drew near, it proved to be but *as* the others, without fruit as they; for, indeed, as the Evangelist observes, the time of figs had not yet arrived, — its fault, if one may use the word, lying in its pretension, in its making a show to run before the rest when it did not so indeed. It was condemned, not so much for having no fruit, as for this, that, not having fruit, it clothed itself abundantly with leaves; with the foliage, which, being there, did, according to the natural order of the tree's development, give pledge and promise that fruit should be found on it if sought. — *Trench.* Rather, because the leaves proved that it had received the means and opportunity to bring forth fruit, but it had not used them. — *P.* Fit emblem of a hypocrite, whose external semblance is a delusion and a sham; fit emblem of the nation in whom the ostentatious profession of religion brought forth no "fruit of good living." — *Farrar.* The tree represents the Hebrew people; the leaves, all the outward forms which, according to the intention of the Founder, should have been signs and accompaniments of holy acts. Our Lord came hungering for such fruits of righteousness; but the time for them, though overdue, was not yet come. — *Cook.* The early fig-tree, conspicuous among its leafless brethren, seemed alone to make a show of fruit and to invite inspection. So Israel, alone among the nations of the world, held forth a promise. From Israel alone could fruit be expected; but none was found, and their harvest-time was past. Therefore Israel perished as a nation; while the Gentile races, barren hitherto, but now on the verge of their spring-time, were ready to burst into blossom and bear fruit. — *Cambridge Bible.*



FIG-TREE.

14. No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. The tree was *hopelessly* barren: for, had it been fruitful the previous year, there would still have been some of the *kermouses* (summer figs) hidden under those broad leaves; and, had it been fruitful *this* year, the *bakkooroth* (early figs) would have set into green and delicious fragrance before the leaves appeared; but on this fruitless tree, there was neither any promise for the future nor any gleanings from the past. And therefore, since it was but deceptive and useless, a barren cumber of the ground, he made it the eternal warning against a life of hypocrisy continued until it was too late. — *Farrar.* Why should Christ have inflicted judgment on the tree, or been angry with it for failing to furnish him with fruit? Of anger there is not the slightest trace in the narrative. This has been invented and imputed to Christ by a cavilling criticism. Judgment, in the true sense, there was none. For the tree, without moral responsibility, was neither guilty of sin nor capable of receiving punishment. —

15. ¹ And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

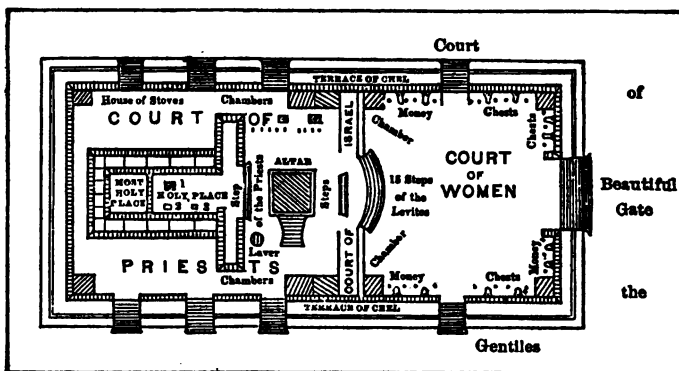
it. And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves;

¹ Matt. 21: 12. Luke 19: 45. John 2: 14.

Abbott. Is it a crime under any circumstances to destroy a useless tree? if not, is it more a crime to do so by miracle? Why, then, is the Saviour of the world—to whom Lebanon would be too little for a burnt-offering—to be blamed by petulant critics because he hastened the withering of one barren tree, and founded, on the destruction of its uselessness, three eternal lessons,—a symbol of the destruction of impenitence, a warning of the peril of hypocrisy, an illustration of the power of faith.—*Farrar.* Sceptics have cavilled at the destruction of property. But the fig-tree was by the wayside, and probably the property of no one. It belonged, however, to Jesus in the highest sense; and he could do as he pleased with his own (Matt. 20: 15).—*Clarke.* The present and personal application of this incident is to all those who make a fair show of religion, but bring not forth the fruits thereof, as Paul describes them in Gal. 5: 22, 23.—*Abbott.*

How the punishment was inflicted. Not by whirlwind or lightning. Jesus simply took away what gave the tree life, and the chance of fruit, and left it to itself. Earth, air, rain, sun,—these obeyed their Lord, stopped the tree's nourishment; then what could it do? So with Jerusalem. He had only to send no more prophets to them, to stop his messages of grace, to withdraw his special care. So, too, with us. God need not destroy us; only withdraw all the grace that keeps us from sin and leads us to do right; only "let us alone," and we go straight to ruin.—*Eugene Stock.*

II. The Cleansing of the Temple.—Vers. 15-18. 15. They come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple. To worship and teach, as was his custom. He



GROUND-PLAN OF TEMPLE.

found his Father's house in a state which too truly shadowed forth the general condition of the whole Jewish church. Every thing out of order and out of course. He found the courts of that holy building disgracefully profaned by worldly transactions. Trading and buying and selling were actually going on within its walls.—*Ryle.* Began to cast out; i.e., to drive out. This casting of the traders out of the Temple is not to be confounded with that recorded in John 2: 13-17, at the commencement of Christ's ministry. It is not at all strange, that, scourged from the Temple, they should, in less than three years, have returned again to corrupt it. The Temple was cleansed, but not filled by the indwelling of the Spirit of God.—*Abbott.* Them that sold and bought in the temple. A market was held there for the sale of animals and those things necessary for the Temple service. Not the less a desecration because so great a convenience.—*Schaff.* The part of the Temple occupied by the traders was not the Temple proper, but the Court of the Gentiles. They were thus practically excluded from all participation in its benefits, since they were not allowed in the inner courts.—*Abbott.* The apparent strangeness of the permission of what seems to us so manifest a desecration, was obviously not felt by the Jews as we feel it. Pilgrims

16. And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, ¹ My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ² ye have made it a den of thieves.

And he would not suffer that ¹⁶ any man should carry a vessel through the temple. And ¹⁷ he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But ye have made it a den of

¹ Isa. 56: 7. ² Jer. 7: 11.

came from all parts of the world to keep the Passover, to offer their sacrifices. They did not bring the victims with them. What plan, it might seem, could be more convenient than that they should find a market where they could buy them, as near as possible to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered? One of the courts of the Temple was therefore assigned for the purpose, and probably the priests found their profit in the arrangement by charging a fee or rent of some kind for the privilege of holding stalls. — *Ellicott*. We have no traces of this market in the Old Testament. It appears first to have arisen after the Captivity, when many would come from foreign lands to Jerusalem. — *Alford*. Overthrew the tables of the money-changers. Money would be required (1) to purchase materials for offerings, (2) to present as free-offerings to the Temple treasury (Mark 12: 41; Luke 21: 1), (3) to pay the yearly Temple tax of half a shekel due from every Jew, however poor. All this could not be received except in a native coin called the Temple shekel, which was not generally current. Strangers, therefore, had to change their Roman, Greek, or Eastern money, at the stalls of the money-changers, to obtain the coin required. This trade gave ready means for fraud, which was only too common. — *Maclear*. We must picture to ourselves, in addition to all the stir and bustle inseparable from such traffic, the wrangling and bitter words and reckless oaths which necessarily grew out of it with such a people as the Jews. — *Ellicott*. Seats (or stands) of them that sold doves. Required for poor women coming for purification (Lev. 12: 6, 8; Luke 2: 24) from all parts of the country, and for other offerings. The sale of doves appears to have been in a great measure in the hands of the priests themselves; and one of the high priests especially is said to have gained great profits from his dovescots on Mount Olivet. — *Maclear*.

16. Would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel (pail or basket). Not a prohibition to carry through these outer courts the sacred utensils of the Temple proper, but a prohibition of the use of the outer court for the purpose of a thoroughfare. — *Abbott*. There would be no temptation, indeed, to use any other portion of it for this purpose, than the immense Court of the Gentiles. It was so immense that tedious circuits would be avoided, in going from place to place, by passing through it. And then, *being only the Court of the Gentiles*, it was not regarded by the supercilious Jews as entitled to that respect which they acknowledged to be due to the other parts of the enclosure. But our Lord set his foot on all such disdainful distinctions, and the profane practices to which they led. — *Morison*.

17. Is it not written. The words which our Lord quotes are a free combination of two prophetic utterances, — one from Isaiah's vision of the future glory of the Temple, as visited both by Jew and Gentile (Isa. 56: 7); one from Jeremiah's condemnation of evils like in nature, if not in form, to those against which our Lord protested (Jer. 7: 11). — *Ellicott*. Of all nations. Rather, as in the Revised, for all the nations. This act was a rebuke, not only of the sacrilege put upon the Temple by converting it into a market-place, but also of the Jewish bigotry which, by thus using the only part of the Temple which was accessible to the Gentiles, excluded them from its benefits. The Temple was not merely for Jewish worshippers, but for all nations. — *Abbott*. A den of thieves. Rather, a cave of robbers or bandits (so the Revised). The language indicates that it was a corrupt and fraudulent traffic, which a corrupt and fraudulent priesthood had permitted to encroach on the worship of God. — *Abbott*. There is scarcely anywhere in the New Testament a more striking illustration of the marvellous moral power of Christ than this act of his in cleansing the Temple, single-handed, of a corruption so entrenched. Yet we must not forget that in it he was doubtless supported by the sympathies of the Gentiles and the more pious Jews, as well as by the consciences of the very men who were driven out, even though the priests winked at the traffic. — *Abbott*. This purification of the Temple indicates in Christ a vigor and intensity of character and a power of indignation which modern thought rarely attributes to him. It interprets the suggestive description of Christ's personal appearance given by John in Rev. 1: 13-16, the only hint of his personal appearance afforded by the New Testament. We can imagine that in this expulsion his eyes were as flames of fire, his feet firm in their tread like feet of brass, his voice as the sound of the ocean, his words as a two-edged sword. This indignation was aroused by (a) the sacrilegious covetousness which made God's house a house of merchandise; (b) the fraud which

18. And ¹the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because ²all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19. And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20. ¶ ³And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

robbers. And the chief priests ¹⁸ and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

And every evening he went ¹⁹ forth out of the city.

And as they passed by in ²⁰ the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to ²¹ remembrance saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answer- ²²

¹ Matt. 21: 45, 46. Luke 19: 47. ² Matt. 7: 28; Mark 1: 22. Luke 4: 32. ³ Matt. 21: 19.

converted it into a den of thieves; (c) the selfishness of the bigotry which excluded the heathen from the only court reserved for them. It should inspire in his disciples a like spirit of indignation (a) against the sacrilegious covetousness which converts the house of God into a mart of merchandise, whether by the sale of indulgences, masses, and prayers to others, or by employing it, not for the praise of God, but for the social and pecuniary profit of the pretended worshipper; (b) against the bigotry which permits us to look with indifference upon the exclusion of the poor, the outcast, the despised from the privileges of God's house. It is a type of (a) the cleansing which Christ comes to do for every soul which is a temple of God (1 Cor. 3: 16), and out of which all unclean things must be driven by the power of God, before it is fit for God's indwelling; (b) the final cleansing, when he will come to cast out all things that defile and work abomination (Rev. 21: 27). Observe that in Revelation the world is represented as dreading "the wrath of the Lamb." Christ's example here does not justify the use of physical force by the Church to cleanse it from corruption; for Christ did not employ physical force. His whip was not a weapon; the power before which the traders fled was the moral power of Christ, strengthened by the concurring judgment of their own consciences and the moral sense of the mass of the people. — *Abbott*.

18. Mark here omits some facts recorded by Matthew, — the healing of the blind and lame in the Temple, and the children crying Hosanna (Matt. 21: 14-17). — *P*. How they might destroy him. The determination to kill him had been formed before (see John 11: 53); but it was strengthened by this attack on their habits and sources of revenue. They feared him. For he was evidently in the right, and sustained by the moral sense of all; and yet his action condemned them who pretended to be the holiest of people, and the watchful guardians of the Temple. — *P*. Their fear was the reason why, instead of laying hands on him at once, they planned and plotted, or *sought* "how they might get rid of him." The people were astonished at his doctrine (rather, at his teaching). It was the strange imperial power of the great speaker that amazed them. He spoke home to their hearts and consciences, and swayed them, they knew not why or how. — *Morison*.

III. The Power of Faith. — Vers. 19-23. 19. When even was come (rather, whenever; i.e., every evening, as in the Revised) he went out of the city. To Bethany.

20. In the morning (Tuesday, April 4) as they passed by. Going back from Bethany to Jerusalem. They saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. No partial blight, leaving life in the root; but it was now dead, root and branch. In Matthew (21: 19) it is said it withered away as soon as it was cursed. But the full blight had not appeared probably at once; and in the dusk, perhaps, as they returned to Bethany, they had not observed it. — *J. F. and B*. Or they may have gone back in the evening by a different path. — *P*. Observe that the effect to the fruit-tree exceeds the sentence: that simply condemns it to fruitlessness. But both in nature and in grace fruitlessness always issues in death. It is only by and through fruit-bearing that life is ever perpetuated. — *Abbott*. That which produces fruitlessness produces death. The irreligion of the Jews made them unable to hold out against the Romans. The weakness of principle that bears no fruit prepares for a fall before temptation. — *P*. He condemned the tree to become in appearance what it was in fact, — a useless thing. — *MacDonald*.

21. Peter calling to remembrance. This is one of the special references to Peter in this Gospel, presenting what was going on in Peter's mind, which confirms the common opinion that Mark wrote it under his direction. Saith unto him. Satisfied that a miracle, so very peculiar a miracle, not of *blessing*, as all his other miracles, but of *cursing*, could not have been wrought but with some higher reference, and fully expecting to hear some-

22. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23. For ¹verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

ing saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say ²³ unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass ; he shall have it.

¹ Matt. 17 : 20 ; 21 : 21. Luke 17 : 6.

thing weighty on the subject. — *J. F. and B.* Which thou cursedst. It is Peter's word, not Christ's. But the being forbidden to bear fruit is an awful curse.

22. Jesus answering saith. If the surprise of the disciples had related not to the sign but the thing signified, our Lord would no doubt have expounded to them the symbolical design of this judicial miracle. But as they seem to have correctly understood its meaning, they were chiefly interested in the miracle itself, — the promptness and completeness of the change effected by a word from Jesus. This astonishment implied a very different experience on their own part ; perhaps frequent failures like the one of which we have already had an account (Mark 9 : 18, 28, 29). For such disappointments he assigns the same cause as on that occasion ; namely, a deficiency of faith. — *Alexander.* Have faith in God. In the God who is Master over nature. — *Abbott.* It was faith, and faith only, that could keep them from being unfruitful. Any thing is too much to be expected, while we look at ourselves ; nothing, while we look to God through Christ. — *Venn.*

23. Verily I say unto you. With great solemnity he seeks to impress upon them a truth which would be of the greatest import to them when they went forth as his apostles to establish and spread his kingdom, — that an unfaltering faith in God would overcome all difficulties, even the most insuperable to the eye of sense. — *Cambridge Bible.* Whosoever (the promise is unlimited as to persons) shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed. Perhaps pointing to the Mount of Olives on whose slope they were standing. The phrase to remove mountains, as in 1 Cor. 13 : 2, uses a natural hyperbole for overcoming difficulties. — *Ellicott.* Language like this was familiar in the schools of the Jews. They used to set out those teachers among them that were more eminent for the profoundness of their learning, or the splendor of their virtues, by such expressions as these, "He is a rooter up or remover of mountains." "They called Rabbah Bar Nachmani 'A rooter up of mountains,' because he had a piercing judgment," that could remove great difficulties. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools.*

It was not literal mountains that they needed to have removed. No good could come from sending Olivet or Hermon into the sea ; and therefore it is probable that the disciples had no thought that Jesus meant literal mountains, for they never removed any. But there were greater obstacles before them than mountains, and harder work to be done than removing them. The mighty Roman empire was to be subdued to Christ. The Jewish prejudices and pride were to be overcome. The crimes and customs, and the idolatry interwoven with all the usages and passions of society, were to be overthrown. A new kingdom was to be set up. And to remove mountains into the sea were easy compared with these things.

Shall not doubt, . . . but shall believe. This is the instrumentality by which these mountains can be removed. God only can remove them ; and he will do it only on condition of faith. Therefore faith in God is the only power by which they can be removed. As to removing literal mountains, no one can have faith to remove them without a direct revelation from God that he wants it done. But, as to moral obstacles, we know God wants them to be removed ; and therefore we can believe. This is treated more fully in the next lesson. Those things . . . shall come. (Rather, as in the Revised, *what he saith cometh to pass.*) He shall have whatsoever he saith. The history of the apostles and of the Christian Church is absolute proof that this promise is true. Multitudes of mountains have been removed by faith. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On the barren fig-tree, see Thomson's *Land and Book*, 1 : 538, 9. Trench on the *Miracles*. MacDonald's *Miracles of our Lord* : "Miracles of Destruction," p. 251. Emmon's *Sermons*, vol. 5 : "The Faith of Miracles." For the mountains to be removed by the disciples, see Uhlhorn's *Conflicts of Christianity* ; *Sermon before the A. B. C. F. M.* : "The Rejected Offering." *Sermons*, by Dr. Griffin, and G. W. Jay on "Seeking Fruit and Finding None." Roger's *Greyson Letters*, p. 128 : "The Best Punishment of Hypocrisy."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The rotten tree. When the Interpreter had done, he takes them out into his garden again, and led them to a tree whose inside was all rotten and gone; and yet it grew and had leaves. Then said Mercy, "What means this?" — "This tree," said he, "whose outside is fair, and whose inside is rotten, is it to which many may be compared that are in the garden of God; who with their mouths speak high in behalf of God, but in deed will do nothing for him; whose leaves are fair, but their heart good for nothing but to be tinder for the devil's tinder-box." — *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*.

II. The punishment for not bearing fruit is the loss of power to bear fruit. In one number of the *Household Words*, Dickens describes a visit to what he calls Skitzland. A man, digging a hole in his garden, broke through the crust of the earth, and fell into the interior. Here he found a strange land, the peculiarity of which was, that, while every person was born physically perfect, at a certain age any part of the body which had not been used was lost entirely, leaving only the bones. Thus a coachman had only stomach and hands; a lawyer had no legs, but a massive jaw; some fashionable young ladies were only a pair of eyes and a bunch of nerves; the schoolmaster had only his heart left. There is a large measure of truth in this as to the spiritual life. The punishment for not doing good and bearing fruit to God, is the loss of power and opportunity to bear fruit. — *P*.

III. Removing mountains. If one tyrant should command a man to move a railroad train, he might push with his hands forever and be utterly unable to move it a hair's breadth. But if he turns the lever that lets on the steam, he can move it with perfect ease. Much of the work the Lord gives his people to do is as hard as to remove mountains: but *faith* is the lever that applies the power of God; and the weakest saint, strong in faith and using God's power, can do mighty works, beyond the power of even angels' strength. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 12. Wherever God gives the means for becoming good and useful, he has a right to expect the good fruit.
2. Wherever there is profession, people have a right to expect that which is professed.
3. Ver. 14. The punishment for not bearing fruit is the taking away the privilege of bearing fruit.
4. This punishment is well called a *curse*, as being so terrible.
5. The very causes which produce unfruitfulness lead to the final ruin.
6. Ver. 15. The temple of our heart should be cleansed from all sin.
7. Ver. 17. Those who do not cleanse their hearts make them a den of thieves, stealing from God what belongs to him, and from men the example and good works due to them.
8. Ver. 18. Those who would cleanse the Church or the community are sure to make enemies of those with whose reputation and gains they interfere.
9. The true Church is God's house of prayer for all peoples, classes, and conditions of men. To exclude any is robbery.
10. Ver. 22. Christ teaches his disciples in all ways, — by object lessons as well as by word.
11. Ver. 23. There are many mountains in our way.
12. The only power that can remove them is God, through faith in him.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Christ here gives us a *parable in action*, with an illustration also in action. He uses THE TREE WITH NOTHING BUT LEAVES. (1) *The barren fig-tree* (vers. 12, 13), with its promise of fruit. The leaves denote profession, and more, the fact that the tree had received all that it needed in order to bear fruit. A type of the Jewish nation, of false professors, of those who possess the means of grace without using them for God. (2) *The punishment for being fruitless, — forbidden to bear fruit forever* (vers. 14, 20, 21). A natural result, as to the Jews and to us. And also sent by God. It is an awful curse not to be permitted to do good. (3) *An example of fruitlessness* (vers. 15-19). The Temple with its leaves of profession, soon to be destroyed. Let us cleanse our souls, made to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. (4) *The power by which we can bear fruit* (vers. 22, 23). Even faith.

LESSON VII. — AUGUST 13.

PRAYER AND FORGIVENESS. — MARK 11: 24-33.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* — MATT. 6: 12.

TIME. — Tuesday, April 4 (12th of Nisan), A. D. 30. Memorable as the last day of our Lord's public teaching.

PLACE. — Vers. 24-26, on prayer, were spoken on the walk from Bethany to Jerusalem, and are a part of the same discourse as the last two verses of Lesson VI. The incident of vers. 27-33 took place in the Temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Ver. 24 with Matt. 21: 22; and vers. 27-33 with Matt. 21: 23-27 and Luke 20: 1-8.

INTRODUCTION.

On the walk from Bethany to Jerusalem the surprise of the disciples at seeing the fig-tree already dead led our Saviour to inculcate *faith* as the means of working such wonders (see last lesson), and of obtaining the answer to prayer and *mutual forgiveness* as a condition of prayer being heard by God. On his entrance into the Temple, the chief priests and scribes, somewhat recovered from their astonishment of the previous day, demanded the authority by which he had acted. Their object was doubtless to elicit such a declaration of his divine power as had already more than once exposed him to the danger of being stoned as a blasphemer. Jesus met the question by another, which, while it implied the answer, confounded their scheme. — *William Smith.*

24. Therefore I say unto you, ¹ What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

Therefore I say unto you, ²⁴ All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye

¹ Matt. 7: 7. Luke 11: 9. John 14: 13; 15: 7; 16: 24.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Prayer and Its Answer. — Ver. 24. 24. Therefore. An inference from the promise given in ver. 23 (in the last lesson). If by faith you can remove mountains, it therefore follows that *whatsoever* you ask, being necessarily less than mountains, will be granted to faith. What things soever ye desire. There is no limit put to the things you may pray for. Every thing you desire, of whatever kind, large or small, for this life or for the next, for body or for spirit, for yourselves or for others, — if you desire it, pray for it. When ye pray. The *Revised* has the true reading, "pray and ask for." The promise is, that requests offered by a faithful heart in prayer will be granted, not that all desires will be fulfilled. — *Cook.* Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. The Greek is, as translated in the Revised, *Believe that ye have received* (2d Aorist). But how can one believe that he *has* received what is still in the future, what he *shall* have? God hears the prayer, and gives as answer his word, which cannot be broken, that the thing desired shall in due time be accomplished. It is like a man giving his check for a sum he has promised you: you accept the check as money, and give him a receipt; and, believing that the check is good, you go at some future time to the bank and draw the money. So that one might say to you, "Believe that you *have* received the payment (in the check), and you *shall* obtain the money." There is an interesting example of this given in Daniel (9: 3, 23, 25), where, in answer to Daniel's prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel informs him that at the *beginning* of his supplications the *commandment* went forth to restore and build Jerusalem; i.e., his prayer was answered: he *had* received. So in Daniel (10: 12, 13) the answer was given at once, but the message did not reach Daniel for months. Faith can be so strong as to rest in the *received answer* to our prayers, in the knowledge that the influences have gone forth and the work begun, and wait in patience till the good results are accomplished. — *P.*

Believe. Faith, as distinguished from credulity, must have a firm foundation in the promises of God, or must be the special gift of God. Wherever God has promised any thing, as in all spiritual progress and gifts, we can believe we will have the exact thing we ask for, because we know it is according to God's will. In many other cases, as in seeking the conversion of particular individuals, or in the desire for personal safety or for tem-

25. And when ye stand praying, ¹ forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26. But ² if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27. ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: ³ and as

shall have them. And when-
soever ye stand praying, for-
give, if ye have aught against
any one; that your Father
also which is in heaven may
forgive you your trespasses.
And they come again to
Jerusalem: and as he was

¹ Matt. 6: 14. Col. 3: 13. ² Matt. 18: 35. ³ Matt. 21: 33. Luke 20: 1.

poral blessings, God often gives us faith as the beginning of the answer to our prayers. Where God gives faith the answer is sure. But, in many cases, the very essence of faith is, "Thy will be done." If we insist on a particular thing, whether it be best in God's sight or not, if we are unwilling to trust the kind of answer, as well as the time of answer, into the hands of our loving Father, then *we have no faith in him*, and cannot claim the promise. Faith is not so much the assurance of a particular gift as a loving confidence in the goodness and wisdom of God. — *P.*

And ye shall have them. The answer to every prayer of faith is certain. There are three kinds of answers: (1) There is an answer in the very prayer itself. The best part of prayer is its being a communion with God. We become acquainted with one another by means of those things which call out mutual feelings and thoughts. So we become acquainted with God by consulting him, and talking with him about his kingdom and our needs, and by answers from him to our prayers. This is the best answer; but this cannot exist without direct answers to our petitions. (2) There are direct answers to our prayers, to all those which are for things promised, for spiritual good, and for many definite objects of desire, both spiritual and temporal. (3) There are many cases where the exact thing prayed for would be impossible: as where two farmers pray, one for pleasant weather, the other for rain, on the same day; or two opposite armies each pray for victory. There are other cases when the exact thing asked for would be the worst thing possible for us, and not what we really desire. Therefore, in all cases where God does not give the exact thing we ask for in faith, he gives us, not only *something better, but what we really desired, or would have desired, had we known all about it as God does.* A child asks for a white powder on the shelf, thinking it sugar. The mother refuses; for it is poison, but gives real sugar instead: but the *real thing desired* is given. But how about the laws of nature? We see that fire will burn a saint as quick as a sinner, and water will drown a missionary as certainly as a robber. Is there any use, then, in praying for safety and help amid the laws of nature? But God controls these laws, and our place in them; and we may be sure, that, in answer to the prayer of faith, God will either prevent us from going into the danger, or save us from it, or will show us some time that not to escape was for our best good. — *P.* Every desire of the human heart, which is the progeny of faith in God, or faith in Christ, will be fulfilled (Ps. 145: 19). It is in absolute coincidence with the desire of God's own heart. Should there be, interwarped or mingled with it, any atom of desire that is not in coincidence with the divine will, then the true believer, in the heart of his heart, desires that that desire should not be fulfilled. When his real prayer is stripped of all its unsentential accessories, it is found that the presentation of that particular item is an excrescence, and forms no part at all of the essence of his petition. — *Morison.*

II. A Test whether We have Faith. — Ver. 25. 25. When ye stand praying. A common and proper posture in prayer (compare Luke 18: 13). These two verses naturally follow as tests whether we have faith in God or not, — a faith that will make us act like God, who is so ready to forgive. — *P.* Forgive, if ye have aught against any. You must ever, in your prayers, be in that frame of loving tenderness to your fellow-men which true faith in God, as his sons, always brings with it. Strife and division destroy your spiritual life, and weaken that faith by which alone you can do great things. — *Geikie.* The connection between the two is so constant, invariable, that neither can you ever find the humble, contrite heart, which sues for mercy at the throne of grace, without finding there also the meek and gentle spirit that goes forth forgivingly toward others; nor do you ever meet with such free, full, generous forgiveness of others, as from those who have themselves partaken of the pardoning grace of God. — *Hanna.*

26. This verse is left out of the *Revised*, but the meaning is all included in ver. 25. If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive. Because their refusing to forgive proves that they have not that humble, repentant spirit which is the necessary condition of forgiveness, and without which forgiveness would do no good. — *P.* He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven. — *Lord Herbert.*

III. Teaching in the Temple. — Vers. 27-33.

27. Here commences that series

he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will

walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; and they said unto 28 him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus said 29 unto them, I will ask of you

of parables and discourses of the Lord to his enemies, exposing his hatred of their hypocrisy, etc. So they are stirred up to compass his death. *Walking in the temple.* As if at home or in his Father's house. — *J. A. Alexander.* Possibly to see if the profanation had been renewed; but according to Matthew, "as he was teaching" (so Luke); so that he seems to have taught as he walked, which was not at all singular. — *Schaff.* The outer court of the Temple, the Court of the Gentiles, was a convenient gathering-place of the people, and during the Passover week would be thronged. Here Christ and his apostles often preached (John 7: 14; 8: 2; Acts 2: 46; 3: 1, 11, etc.). — *Abbott.* There come to him. It was evident that systematic plans had been formed to silence him (Luke 19: 47, 48). Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians united against him; assumed to be his disciples; mingled their questions with those of honest inquirers; endeavored to entrap him into answers that should arouse popular prejudice or embroil him with the Roman government. — *Abbott.* The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders. Of these three sections of the Sanhedrim, the first was composed of priests; the second, of expounders and transcribers of the law; the third, of the heads of the principal families of Israel. — *Ellicott.* It was an official message, sent with a view to make our Saviour declare himself to be a prophet sent from God. In which case the Sanhedrim had power to take cognizance of his proceedings, as of a professed teacher. Thus the Sanhedrim sent a deputation to John on his appearing as a teacher (John 1: 19). — *Alford.* When Judea became a Roman province, the Sanhedrim either, as is more likely, assumed for the first time, or recovered, its station as a kind of senate or representative body of the nation; possessed itself of such subordinate functions of the government as were not actually administered by the Roman procurator. It is the *Sanhedrim*, under the name of the *chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people*, who take the lead in all the transactions recorded in the Gospels. — *Henry H. Milman, D.D.* In all the pomp of official costume, of social pride and popular renown, they set themselves against the simple Galilean, while the multitudes looked on. They entered into a keen and prolonged controversy with him on points selected beforehand, putting forward their champions of debate to entangle him in his talk; — their distinct object being, either to discredit him with the audience, or to elicit something from his lips in the heat of argument which might form a ground of accusation against him before the civil authority. — *Stalker.*

28. By what authority? The right to take the place of an instructor was, as a rule, conferred by the scribes or their chief representatives on one who had studied "at the feet" of some great teacher, and been solemnly admitted (the delivery of a key, as the symbol of the right to interpret, being the outward token) to that office. The question implied that those who asked it knew that the Prophet of Nazareth had not been so admitted. The second question gave point to the first. Could he name the Rabbi who had trained him or authorized him to teach? — *Ellicott.* Doest thou these things? Referring both to his teaching and to his cleansing of the Temple on the previous day. — *Schaff.* Their question seems a fit and fair one. They are the constituted keepers of the Temple, of the only public building of the city that the Romans have left entirely under Jewish control. There has been a manifest invasion of the territory committed to their guardianship, of the offices that they alone are held competent to discharge; for who is this, that, being neither priest nor Levite, nor scribe nor elder, deals with the sacred place as if it were his own? — *Hanna.* No other authority for any reformation is ever required than the power and grace to achieve it. — *Abbott.* Every true-hearted Christian who tries to do good in the world must make up his mind to be treated like his Master. He must never be surprised to find that the self-righteous and the worldly-minded dislike his ways. He will be regarded as meddling, disorderly, and self-conceited, a pestilent fellow, and a troubler of Israel; and, worst of all, he will often meet with enemies where he ought to find friends. Let all who are attacked by the world for trying to do good, take comfort in the thought that they are only drinking of the cup which Christ drank. If we are to wait till the world approves our plans, and is satisfied with the propriety of our efforts, we shall never do any thing on earth. — *Ryle.*

29. I will also ask of you one question. The counter-question is once more a testimony to the heavenly supremacy of Christ's wisdom as a teacher. — *Lange.* The divine

also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30. The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for ¹all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it ³⁰ from heaven or from men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From ³² men — they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet. And they answered ³³ Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

¹ Matt. 3 : 5; 14 : 5. Mark 6 : 20.

readiness, and (if we may be allowed the expression) *presence of mind*, of Jesus was most conspicuously shown on this perilous day and the next day. — *Cambridge Bible*. "According to the customs of the Jewish doctors, and even of Grecian disputants, if any one proposed a captious question to another, the one had a right to ask one in return, and not to answer the question addressed to him until his own had received a reply." — *Quoted in Genius of the Gospel*. He replies in such a way as to force his adversaries themselves to declare their incompetence. The question he lays before them is not a skilful manoeuvre: it is dictated by the very nature of the situation. — *Godet*. The wisdom of God very easily finds means to confound the designs and malice of men. — *Quesnel*.

30. The baptism of John (meaning thereby the whole office and teaching of which the baptism was the central point and seal) . . . from heaven, or of men? They had heard the answer two years before from John himself (John 1 : 19). — *Ellicott*. If they had recognized the divine mission of John, they must also have acknowledged the authority by which Jesus did these things; for John expressly declared that he was sent to testify of him, and bore witness to having seen the Holy Spirit descend and rest upon him. — *Alford*. Answer me. The tone is peremptory, implying confidence of victory in this encounter. — *Alford*.

31. They reasoned with themselves. The self-communing was eminently characteristic. The priests and scribes had, in dealing with the mission of John, halted between two opinions. At one time they came to his baptism (Matt. 3 : 7); at another they said, "He hath a devil" (Matt. 11 : 18). — *Ellicott*. It is noteworthy, that, in reasoning with one another, it was not their aim to get such an answer to our Lord's query as would embody the truth, or even their own conviction in reference to the truth. They simply — on a plane of low expediency — considered what would serve their purpose as inquisitors. They therefore came to the conclusion that it would be inexpedient to say that John's baptism was from heaven. — *Morison*. If . . . from heaven. A divine messenger sent by their own God whom they pretended to serve. Why then did ye not believe him? Accept him and his mission, as they were bound in consistency to do if they believed he was sent from heaven. — *P*. How far they were from doing this, is evident from Christ's charging them with the murder of John the Baptist. — *Abbott*. On the contrary, he was a thorn in their side. — *Morison*.

32. If we shall say of men. This they evidently believed. They feared the people. Luke says, "*All the people will stone us.*" Demagogues who lead the multitude astray fear the multitude. — *Schaff*. They cared nothing for the truth, but every thing for themselves.

33. We cannot tell. Literally, *We do not know*. A falsehood, as vers. 25, 26, show. — *Schaff*. They were caught in a rough alternative, and could extricate themselves only by a step of desperation, — a confession of ignorance, and that of hypocritical ignorance. — *Lange*. There was, indeed, no need to answer. For those who were not wilfully blind and deaf, the words which he had spoken, the works which he had done, the sinless life which he had lived, were proofs of an authority from God. — *Ellicott*. Their utter want of moral principle, their supreme and even unconcealed indifference to the truth, stands out nowhere more clearly than in these last days of Christ's ministry. (Compare Matt. 22 : 15; Luke 20 : 20; John 11 : 47-50). — *Abbott*. Neither tell I you. An answer, not to their outward words, "*We know not*," but to their inward thoughts, "*We will not tell.*" —

Alford. He that knows he is wrong ought not to be argued with. — *Bishop Wilson.* This refusal is similar to that made when a sign from heaven was demanded (Matt. 12:38). The answer assumes their proven and confessed incompetency to decide on the authority of a prophet, and, consequently, his superiority to their questioning. Such a defeat increased their opposition. — *Schaff.* One may admire in this incident the skill with which Christ confounds the enemies of truth. It illustrates, (a) Christ's refusal to submit his claims to the decision of inimical sceptics; (b) the unity of divine truth; one cannot accept a part and reject a part, e.g., accept John the Baptist and reject Christ; (c) the hypocrisy of much that appears to be religious investigation; (d) the right of a religious teacher to answer a fool according to his folly, *if he has the ability so to do.* — *Abbott.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Prayer, Professor Phelps's *Still Hour.* Trench's *Poems*, "The Suppliant." A. C. Thompson's *Mercy Seat.* H. D. Williams's *Wonders of Prayer.* Emmons's *Sermons*, vol. 5, "The Faith of Miracles." *National Preacher*, 8, *Sermon*, by C. Everest, on "The Nature and Efficacy of Prayer." Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, "Prevalent Prayer." Guthrie's *Gospel in Ezekiel*, "Nature, Necessity, and Power of Prayer."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Our prayers have been likened to a rope by which one in a little boat is striving to draw a great ship to himself. If he does not move the ship towards himself, he at least moves himself towards the ship. — *P.*

II. Dr. Judson, the great missionary, gives his experience as this: "I never was deeply interested in any object, I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for *any thing, but it came.* At some time, no matter at how distant a day, somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, — *it came.*"

III. Prayer and natural law. Many cannot see how God can answer prayer for safety and help amid the certain action of nature's laws. They ask, —

"When the loose mountain trembles from on high
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?
Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?"

But (1) God, who ordained nature, knew, when he set the laws in motion, what you would pray for, and what answer to give; and so answered your prayer long before it was prayed. Hence you can believe that *you have received*, and therefore *shall have*. (2) God can lead us, by his providence and his spirit, into the best place among nature's laws. Gravitation need not cease for us, but God can lead us not to go by. The fire will burn all alike, but God can keep us from the fire. — *P.*

IV.

Strive! yet I do not promise
The prize you dream of to-day
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,
And melt in your hands away.
But another and holier treasure,
You would now perchance disdain,
Will come when your toil is over,
And pay you for all your pain.

Wait! but I do not tell you
The hour you long for now
Will not come with its radiance vanished,
And a shadow upon its brow;
Yet far through the misty future,
With a crown of starry light,
An hour of joy you know not
Is winging her silent flight.

Pray! though the gift you long for
May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears
An answer, not that you long for,
But *diviner, will come one day:*
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet *strive and wait and pray.* — *Anon.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 24. Christians have all the power given them they need for their happiness and their work.
2. We can rest implicitly on the goodness, wisdom, and power of our Father.
3. God loves to give to his children every thing that is good for them.
4. The only condition is that faith which joins us to God in desires and in love.
5. Ver. 25. This faith is proved by our being like Christ in forgiving our enemies.
6. Ver. 27, etc. Reformers are sure to get into trouble.
7. The authority of all true reformers is from God, who wants all things to be right.
8. Ver. 31. Bad men seek what is expedient for themselves, and not what is true.
9. Ver. 33. We should use wisdom in dealing with opponents of the truth.
10. It is often wisest to "carry the war into Africa," and not merely stand on the defensive. Make the infidels answer some of the hard questions that arise from their own positions.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson follows close upon the last, showing how to remove the mountain of difficulty in their way. The subject is **PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER**. (1) *The prayer of faith* (ver. 24): what we can pray for; what is the faith needed, and how we can believe we have received before we see the answer. (2) *The answer to prayer* (ver. 24): the certainty of an answer; how God answers, and does not break natural laws; three kinds of answer to prayer. (3) *A test of faith* (vers. 25, 26): forgiveness is a test; for, if we trust God, we will be like him in forgiving, and obey his command to forgive. The unforgiving are unfit for heaven. (4) *An account of some who had no faith* (vers. 27-33). Show how their bad character arose from a want of faith.

LESSON VIII. — AUGUST 20.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN. — MARK 12: I-12.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.* — Ps. 118: 22.

TIME. — Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30; immediately after the incident in the last lesson. The last day of Christ's public ministry.

PLACE. — In the Temple at Jerusalem.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 21: 33-46. Luke 20: 9-19.

INTRODUCTION.

After Jesus had put to silence the chief priests and scribes, he spoke to them three parables. The Two Sons, recorded only by Matthew; The Wicked Husbandmen, the present lesson; and The Marriage of the King's Son, given only by Matthew. — *P.* It was as if in a glass held up before them they might see themselves. Yet even these parables, wearing as they do so severe and threatening an aspect, are not words of defiance, but of earnest, tenderest love, — spoken, if it were yet possible to turn them from their purpose, to save them from the fearful sin they were about to commit, to win them also for the kingdom of God. — *Trench.*

1. ¹ And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

And he began to speak unto them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into

¹ Matt. 21: 33. Luke 20: 9.

EXPLANATORY.

1. He began to speak unto them. It was spoken in the presence of the people, but directly to the parties who had assailed him. — *Schaff.* A certain man. (In Matthew, "a householder;" i.e., master of a family.) Representing God. Planted. The householder not merely possessed, he "planted," the vineyard. So God planted his spiritual vineyard, (a) under Abraham, (b) under Moses (Deut. 32: 12-14; Ex. 15: 17), (c) under Joshua, when the Jews were established in the land of Canaan. — *Cambridge Bible.* So God planted the Christian Church. And all we have and are is the gift of God, his planting. A vineyard. Out Lord draws, as was his wont, his illustration from common life and familiar objects. Palestine was emphatically a vine-growing country, and fitted, in consequence of its peculiar configuration and climate, for rearing the very finest grapes. — *Morison.* By the "vineyard" we are to understand the kingdom of God as successively realized, (1) in the Jewish nation, and (2) in the spiritual Christian Church. It applies also to the heart and soul of each of us. — *P.* The opening words at once suggest a comparison with Isaiah (5: 1-7). No doubt our Lord here takes up the prophecy there, the more willingly building on the old foundations, that his adversaries accused him of destroying

2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

another country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard.

the law; and not in word only, but by the whole structure of the parable, connecting his own appearing with all that had gone before in the past Jewish history, so that men should look at it as part, indeed as the crowning and final act, of that great dealing of mercy and judgment which had ever been going forward. The image of the kingdom of God as a vine-stock or as a vineyard is not peculiar to this parable, but runs through the whole Old Testament (Deut. 32: 32; Ps. 80: 8-16; Isa. 5: 1-7; 27: 1-7; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 15: 1-6; 19: 10); and has this especial fitness, that no property was considered to yield so large a return (Cant. 8: 11, 12). None was therefore of such price and esteem. It no doubt belongs to the fitness of the image, that a vineyard does, if it is to bring forth richly, require the *most* diligent and never-ceasing care; that there is no season in the year in which much has not to be done in it. Virgil presses this very strongly in words not unworthy to be kept in mind by all to whom a spiritual vineyard has been committed. (See *Georg.*, 2: 397-419.) — *Trench.* Set an hedge about it. Probably a hedge of thorns; possibly a wall. — *Schaff.* Enclosures of loose stone, like the walls of fields in Derbyshire or Westmoreland, everywhere catch the eye on the bare slopes of Hebron, of Bethlehem, and of Olivet. — *Stanley, Sinai and Palestine.* The hedge around them is the law, separating them from the Gentiles. — *Theophylact.* By their circumscription through the law (Eph. 2: 14) the Jews became a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations; that law being at once a hedge of separation and of defence, — a wall of fire, which, preserving them distinct from the idolatrous nations round them and from their abominations, gave them the pledge and assurance of the continued protection of God. Nor should it be forgotten, that not inwardly only, but outwardly as well, Judea, through its geographical position, was hedged round, — by the bounty of nature on every side circumscribed and defended. — *Trench.* Digged a place (or pit) for the wine-fat (or wine-press). The wine-press (Matt. 21: 33) consisted of two parts, — (1) the press, or trough, above, in which the grapes were placed, and there trodden by the feet of several persons amidst singing and other expressions of joy (Judg. 9: 27; Isa. 16: 10; Jer. 25: 30); (2) a smaller trough (*yekeb*), into which the expressed juice flowed through a hole or spout (Neh. 13: 15; Isa. 63: 2; Lam. 1: 15). Here the smaller trough, which was often hollowed ("digged") out of the earth or native rock and then lined with masonry, is put for the whole apparatus, and is called a *wine-fat*. — *Cambridge Bible.* This simply represents one means by which the fruit God expected from his people could be brought into use. Built a tower. Towers were erected in vineyards, of a very considerable height, and were intended for the accommodation of keepers, who defended the vineyards from thieves and from troublesome animals. — *Ripley.* In the time of the vintage used for recreation, no doubt, as in European countries. The tower represents the provisions made by God for the protection and prosperity of his people. — *Schaff.* The hedge and wine-press and tower represent the various advantages conferred by God upon the Jewish people (Rom. 9: 4). Observe how great care, for what belonged to the husbandmen he himself did. The sources of national prosperity with all nations come from God. — *Abbott.* These also represent all the influences God confers on us to make us fruitful, — the Bible, the sabbath, Christian homes, the influences of the Spirit. — *P.* Let it out to husbandmen. Representing the rulers of the Jews (Matt. 21: 45); but the people as a whole, a nation or a church, are included (Matt. 21: 43). — *Schaff.* And also each person to whom God has committed the influences for making his own soul a kingdom of God. — *P.* It is customary in the East, as in Ireland and in other parts of Europe, for the owner to let out his estate to *husbandmen*; i.e., to tenants, who pay him an annual rent, either in money or, as apparently in this case, in kind. — *Abbott.* It has pleased God, that, in his kingdom of grace, laborers should receive a reward of grace. — *Schaff.* Went into a far country. (Better, "into another country," as in the Revised.) "*For a long while*" (or *time*), adds St. Luke. At Sinai, when the theocratic constitution was founded, and in the miracles which accompanied the deliverance from Egypt, the Lord may be said to have openly manifested himself to Israel, but then to have withdrawn himself again for a while, not speaking to the people again face to face (Deut. 34: 10-12), but waiting in patience to see what the law would effect, and what manner of works the people, under the teaching of their spiritual guides, would bring forth. — *Trench.* Christ repeatedly represents God as appearing to withdraw from the earth, that he may test the fidelity and obedience of his children. This represents and partially explains "the eternal silences," — God's seeming absence. — *Abbott.*

2. At the season; i.e., when the fruit-season drew near. Probably no definite time, but whenever any special duty was to be done, or special call to repentance made as by the

3. And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

4. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled.

5. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

And they took him, and beat 3 him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them 4 another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and handled shamefully. And he 5 sent another; and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some.

prophets. — *P.* All time is the time of fruit with the individual and with the nation. God continually seeks for fruit. — *Abbott.* God expects fruit after such careful preparation. — *Schaff.* A servant. The servants—that is, the prophets, and other more eminent ministers of God in his theocracy—*were sent*, being raised up at particular times, having particular missions. The patience of the householder is thus brought out and magnified, that it may set forth the yet more wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of God. — *Trench.* God began about 430 years after the Exodus to send his prophets to the people of Israel, and continued even until John the Baptist; but all was in vain: they “persecuted the prophets,” casting them out, and putting them to death. — *Alford.* Every special call to love and serve God, every service at the church, every providence of God, every voice of the Holy Spirit, every season of revival, is a servant whom God sends to us for the fruits that are due him. — *P.* Of the fruit. The householder’s share. The rent not being paid in money, but in a stipulated portion of the produce, according to the well-known *metayer* system once prevalent over a great part of Europe. The fruits were obedience, love, righteous living, teaching the true God to the nations, etc. These fruits which are demanded are in no wise to be explained as particular works, nor yet as a condition of honesty and uprightness, but much rather as the repentance and the inward longing after true inward righteousness, which the law was unable to bring about. — *Olshausen.*

3. They caught him. The gradual growth of the outrage is clearly traced: (1) The first servant they “*caught, beat, and sent away empty*”; (2) at the second they “*cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled*”; (3) the third “*they killed*.” — *Cambridge Bible.* They beat him. A verb which strictly means to flay or skin, but is secondarily applied to the severest kind of scourging. — *Alexander.* Empty. Empty-handed; i.e., without that which he came for. According to the obvious design of the whole parable, this is a lively figure for the undutiful and violent reception often given to the prophets or other divine messengers, and the refusal to obey their message. (See Matt. 23: 29-31; 34, 37; Luke 11: 47-50; 13: 33, 34. Compare 1 Thess. 2: 15; Rev. 16: 6; 18: 24.) — *Alexander.* The behavior of these husbandmen is only a picture of the way impatient men still treat God’s messengers of mercy,—the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the influences of religion,—rejecting and sending them away empty. — *P.*

4. Another servant. God sent many prophets to the Jews, as he sends many influences to us. Shamefully handled, or *dishonored*. It is the generic summing up of all that the imagination naturally suggests when we think of what must have been done to the man in the affray in which his head was seriously wounded. — *Morison.*

5. Him they killed. Some of the prophets were not merely maltreated, but actually put to death. Thus, if we may trust Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, Isaiah sawn asunder by king Manasseh; and, for an ample historical justification of this description, see Jer. 37, 38; 1 Kings 18: 13; 22: 24-27; 2 Kings 6: 31; 21: 16; 2 Chron. 24: 19-22; 36: 16; and also Acts 7: 52; and the whole passage finds a parallel in the words of the apostle (Heb. 11: 36). The patience of the householder under these extraordinary provocations is wonderful,—that he sends messenger after messenger for the purpose of bringing back, if possible, these wicked men to a sense of duty, and does not at once resume possession of his vineyard, and inflict summary vengeance, as the end proves that he had power to do, upon them; and this his patience is thus brought out and magnified, that it may set forth the yet more wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of God. — *Trench.* The conduct of the “lord of the vineyard” is a vivid representation of God’s dealings with man. It is a faithful picture of his merciful dealings with the Jewish church. It is a no less faithful picture of his gracious treatment of the Gentile churches. For eighteen hundred years he has suffered their manners. They have repeatedly tried him by false doctrines, superstitions, and contempt of his word. Yet he has repeatedly granted them seasons of refreshing, raised up for them holy ministers and mighty reformers, and not cut them off, notwithstanding all their persecutions. We have probably little idea of the extent of our obligations, and of the number of gracious messages which the Lord of the vineyard is constantly sending to our souls. The last day will unfold to our wondering eyes a long list of unacknowledged kindnesses, of which, while

6. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8. And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

He had yet one, a beloved 6 son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they 8 took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vine-

we lived, we took no notice. Mercies before conversion, mercies after conversion, mercies at every step of their journey on earth, will be revealed to the minds of saved saints, and make them ashamed of their own thanklessness. — *Ryle*.

6. Having yet therefore one son. This was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted, on the other the measure of sins is perfectly filled up. Undoubtedly they who were our Lord's actual hearers quite understood what he meant, and the honor which in these words he claimed as his own; though they were unable to turn his words against himself, and to accuse him, on the strength of them, of making himself, as indeed he did then affirm himself, the Son of God. — *Trench*. One son, his well-beloved, he sent him. This saying, put at that time by Jesus in the mouth of God, has a peculiar solemnity. There is his answer to the question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" Here, as everywhere, the meaning of the title *son* transcends absolutely the notion of Messiah, or theocratic king, or any *office* whatever. The title expresses, above all, the notion of a personal relation to God as Father. By this name Jesus establishes between the servants and himself an immeasurable distance. — *Godet*. They will reverence my son. That is, they will respect and treat with due esteem such a messenger (John 3:16, 17). — *Jacobus*. The expression of the hope that the husbandmen will reverence the son implies, of course, no ignorance, but the sincere will of God that all should be saved. — *Schaff*. Is there not infinite reason that infinite beauty and excellence should be esteemed and loved, and that supreme authority should be obeyed, and the highest character revered? If we form our expectations from what we find in fact among mankind in other cases, sure we may expect the Son of God would meet with such a reception in our world: the thousandth part of this kindness would excite gratitude between man and man, and he would be counted a monster that would not be moved with it. — *Davies*. If the love of God, shown in sending his Son Christ Jesus to save us, if all that was done for us on the cross, will not touch our hearts and make us choose God, then nothing will. The last hope is gone when we reject Christ. — *P*.

7. This is the heir. He for whom the inheritance is meant, and to whom it will in due course rightfully arrive, — not, as in earthly relations, by the death, but by the free appointment of the actual possessor. Christ is "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2), not as he is the Son of God (for as such he created all), but as he is the Son of man. — *Trench*. The Messiah to whom this world is to be given. He will inherit the vineyard when all the people are brought into the kingdom of God, and his kingdom is fully established. Come, let us kill him. The very words of Genesis (37:20), where Joseph's brethren express a similar resolution. This resolution had actually been taken (John 11:53). — *Alford*. It is the *heart* which speaks in God's hearing. The thought of men's hearts is their true speech, and therefore given as though it were the words of their lips. — *Trench*. Did the Jewish rulers know they were putting to death the heir, the Son of God? (1) They were plainly told, and ought to have known. (2) In all probability the truth did more than once flash upon them. (3) The final resolution to kill him was taken immediately after his greatest exhibition of divine power in the raising of Lazarus (John 11:46-53). — *Stock*. The inheritance shall be ours. If Jesus were the Messiah (and this implies that they had so much conviction of it as to fear that he might be), and he was introducing the kingdom of God, whose whole spirit was so different from theirs, then they would lose their places as rulers, as teachers, as men of influence, their authority over the people, and their chief business. They were so connected with a system which must pass away with Christ, with wrong ideas and principles and customs which Christ was doing away, that, if Christ prevailed, they must fall. But they imagined, that, if they could destroy Christ, they could continue in possession of the inheritance, be rulers over Israel, teachers and leaders of the people, the possessors of the nation. As referring to the vineyard of our own souls, it is the determination not to be ruled by Christ, but to be our own king, and hold sole possession of ourselves to do as we please. — *P*.

8. They killed him. As the Jews did Jesus. They killed that they might possess;

9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10. And have ye not read this scripture; ¹ The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

yard. What therefore will the 9
lord of the vineyard do? he
will come and destroy the
husbandmen, and will give the
vineyard unto others. Have ye 10
not read even this scripture:
The stone which the build-
ers rejected,
The same was made the
head of the corner:
This was from the Lord, 11
And it is marvellous in our
eyes!

¹ Ps. 118: 22.

and because they killed they lost. — *Augustine*. Cast him out of the vineyard. This may involve an allusion to Christ suffering "without the gate" (Heb. 13: 12, 13; John 19: 17). The prophecy was meant, if possible, at the last hour to prevent the guilt of its own fulfilment (2 Kings 8: 12, 13). — *Cambridge Bible*.

9. What shall the lord . . . do? All means had been tried, and nothing but judgment was now left. — *Alford*. In the question itself Christ makes the same appeal to his hearers, compelling them to condemn themselves out of their own mouths, which Isaiah (5: 3) had done before. It may be that the Pharisees, to whom he addressed himself, and who gave the answer reported (Matt. 21: 41), had as yet missed the scope of the parable, answering as they did, and, so before they were aware, pronounced sentence against themselves. — *Trench*. He will come. The coming of the Lord in this place is to be interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem. — *Cook*. This was spoken by the Pharisees. And destroy the husbandmen. The polity of the Jews was destroyed, their Temple razed to the ground, their capital laid waste by the Romans, about forty years after this. Give the vineyard unto others. Expressed by the apostle when he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13: 46). The others were the Christian Church which Christ ordained for his kingdom. And, if we will not serve God, he will find those who will use their wealth and privileges for his kingdom and the advancement of all good. The righteous shall inherit the earth; and, if we refuse to be righteous, we cannot inherit. — *P*. The "God forbid," which, according to St. Luke, the people uttered when they heard the terrible doom of the husbandmen, gives evidence that the scope of the parable had not escaped their comprehension, — that they had understood it, even before its plain interpretation at the last. — *Trench*.

10. Have ye not read this scripture. Referring them to Ps. 118: 22, 23, — a psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4: 11; 1 Pet. 2: 7). In the primary meaning of the psalm the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the site of the Temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's Temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, — on which, as the chief corner-stone, the two walls met and were bonded together. — *Plumptre*. The reason why he leaves for a moment the image of the vineyard, is because of its inadequacy to set forth one important part of the truth which was needful to make the moral complete: namely this, that the malice of the Pharisees should not defeat the purpose of God; that the son should yet be the heir; that not merely vengeance should be taken, but that he should take it. — *Trench*. The stone. The stone is the whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in himself. — *Alford*. The builders rejected. The builders answer to the husbandmen: they were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual building, as these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard. The rejection of the chief corner-stone answers exactly to the denying and murdering the heir. — *Trench*. Become the head of the corner. The most important foundation-stone, joining two walls. A reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, as in Ephes. 2: 19-22, may be included (so *Alford*); but the main thought is that the Messiah, even if rejected by the "builders," should become the corner-stone of the real temple of God (his new spiritual kingdom). — *Schaff*. Every temple that is to stand, be it nation or church or individual soul, must have Christ for the corner-stone, or it will perish. For the time is coming when Jesus shall be King of all in heaven and on earth.

11. This. That is this strange exaltation of the despised to be chief of all. Was the Lord's doing. (Or, as in the Revised, This was from the Lord.) It is one of the Lord's wonderful ways of working, and will come to pass because God rules and controls

12. ¹ And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people : for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them : and they left him, and went their way.

And they sought to lay hold ¹² on him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them: and they left him, and went away.

¹ Matt. 21 : 45, 46. Mark 11 : 18. John 7 : 25, 30, 44.

all things. See Matt. 21 : 42, and the thoughts there added in vers. 43, 44; compare Luke 20 : 17, 18: both narratives are fuller at this point. "You know this verse, do you not?" continued Jesus: "Well, then, because the stone which you have rejected has been chosen by God as the foundation-stone of his new spiritual kingdom, every one who shall fall on it—that is, every one who, by rejecting me, the Messiah, shall have drawn down on himself destruction—will perish; but he on whom it will fall—he, I mean, on whom I, the Messiah, will let loose my avenging judgments for his rejection of me—will be crushed to pieces small as the dust or chaff that is scattered to the winds. Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from Israel, and from you, its present heads, and be given to a nation who will render to God the fruits he has a right to claim from it."—*Geikie*.

12. And they sought to lay hold on him. The three accounts supplement each other here. The purpose to seize him is plainly stated in all. Mark shows that it was a continued effort (literally, "they were seeking"); while Luke tells that they would have done so on the spot, had they not been afraid of the people. For they knew, etc. Matthew gives the more general reason for this fear: "because they held him as a prophet." Their desire to seize him was increased by this parable; but their fear of the people was also increased, since they (i.e., the rulers) perceived that he spake the parable against them, and in the presence of the people (Luke 20 : 9), so that they felt themselves convicted before the people. Conscience made them cowards.—*Schaff*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trench on the *Parables*. Arnot's *Parables of our Lord*, 237-253. *Christ in Literature*, 288-290. *Geikie's Life of Christ*, chap. 55. Trench's *Westminster Sermons*: "Lost Opportunities." *Sermons*: by McLaren, "The Stone of Stumbling;" by Payson, vol. 3, "Man's Treatment of Christ."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. He sent his son. I remember one of the poets hath an ingenious fancy, that "the God of love had shot all his golden arrows at him, but could never pierce his heart, till at length he put himself into the bow, and darted himself straight into his breast." Methinks this doth some way adumbrate God's method of dealing with men. When all his other gifts could not prevail, he at last made a gift of himself, to testify his affections and to engage theirs.—*Scougal: Life of God in the Soul of Man*.

II. The rejected stone. It is said, that, when Solomon's Temple was building, all the stones were brought from the quarry ready cut and fashioned, and there were marked on all the blocks the places where they were to be put. Amongst the stones was a very curious one: it seemed of no describable shape; it appeared unfit for any portion of the building. They tried it at this wall, but it would not fit; they tried it in another, but it could not be accommodated: so, vexed and angry, they threw it away. The Temple was so many years building, that this stone became covered with moss, and grass grew around it. Everybody passing by laughed at the stone. They said Solomon was wise, and doubtless all the other stones were right: but, as for that block, they might as well send it back to the quarry; for it was quite sure it was meant for nothing. Year after year rolled on, and the poor stone was still despised. The eventful day came when the temple was to be finished and opened, and the multitude was assembled to the grand sight. The builders said, "Where is the top-stone?" "Where is the pinnacle?" They little thought where the crowning marble was, until some said, "Perhaps that stone which the builders refused is meant to be the top-stone." They then took it, and hoisted it to the top of the house; and as it reached the summit they found it well adapted to the place. Loud hosannas made the welkin ring, as the stone which the builders refused thus became the head-stone of the corner. So it is with Christ Jesus.—*Spurgeon*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. God has given each of us a vineyard to take care of for him.
2. This vineyard is all in perfect order for producing the fruits of righteousness.

3. God has done all that can wisely be done for us to make us good.
4. Ver. 2. God has a right to good fruit from these vineyards.
5. God's messengers are (1) calls to repentance, (2) sabbaths, (3) Bibles, (4) the Holy Spirit, (5) opportunities to do good, (6) occasions for obeying his commands, (7) all his mercies, deserving obedience, and love.
6. Ver. 6. The highest possible proof of God's desire to save us is the sending his Son.
7. If we reject him, there are no means left whereby we can be brought to salvation.
8. Ver. 7. Men imagine that if they refuse Jesus for master they can be their own masters.
9. Ver. 9. But it only leads the soul to sin and ruin.
10. The greatest judgment which can befall a people is the taking away the kingdom of God from them. They are sure to perish.
11. Men's actions and lives and words condemn themselves in sinning against God. "Ye are witnesses against yourselves."
12. Whatever men may do, Jesus and his kingdom are sure of success.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The practical point to which all this lesson should minister is, THAT GOD HAS GIVEN EACH OF US A WELL-FURNISHED VINEYARD, AND HOW WE SHOULD USE IT. (1) *The vineyard* (ver. 1). The soul of each one, well endowed by God with all the faculties and powers. (2) *The fruits*. All good deeds and right feelings toward God and man. (3) *Sending for the fruits* (ver. 2). See Practical, No. 5. In addition he sends Jesus Christ, who died for us. (4) *The rejection of those sent* (vers. 3-8). All neglect, refusal to believe and obey, grieving the Spirit. (5) *The two results* (vers. 9-12). Destruction for those rejecting, but triumph for the rejected.

LESSON IX. — AUGUST 27.

PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES SILENCED. — MARK 12:13-27.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* — 1 TIM. 4:8.

TIME. — Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30. The same day as the last lesson.

PLACE. — Still in the temple at Jerusalem.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (17th year). Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee (34th year); Herod Philip, of Trachonitis, etc.; Pontius Pilate, of Judea (fifth year).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 22:15-33. Luke 20:20-40.

INTRODUCTION.

After the parable of the wicked husbandmen, Jesus utters one more parable, that of the king's son (Matt. 22:1-14). There was but one of two courses before them. They will see their sins, and repent, as Jesus wished them to; or being thus accused, and refusing to repent, they will be still more enraged against him. They refused to repent; and, filled with a desire for vengeance, they take counsel with the Herodians how they may compel him to say something that will refute his claims as the Messiah, or give ground for an accusation against him before the government.

13. ¶¹ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words. And they send unto him 13 certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they

¹ Matt. 22:15. Luke 20:20.

EXPLANATORY.

13. They. The Pharisees, now no longer in their official capacity, as deputed by the Sanhedrim, but on their own responsibility, and as representing a *party*. Send unto

14. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?

might catch him in talk. And 14 when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cesar, or not? Shall we give, or

him. After holding a consultation together (Matt. 22:15). Certain of the Pharisees. "Their disciples," says Matthew; probably young and zealous scholars in that hardening school.—*J. F. and B.* Concealing themselves, and sending persons who should be unknown to Jesus.—*Abbott.* And of the Herodians. That party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family as the last hope of retaining for the Jews a fragment of national government, as distinguished from absolute dependence upon Rome as a province of the empire. Supporters of the family of Herod, who held their dominions by the grant of the Roman Emperor, would be in favor of paying tribute to the supreme power.—*Cook.* Pharisees and Herodians. The great foes of religion, which have in all ages opposed its progress and undermined its glory, are hypocrisy and profaneness. Between these two thieves the jewel hangs, as its great Master on the cross; and they both revile it, the one under the character of a familiar friend, the other under that of an open enemy.—*Dr. Horneck.* To catch him in his words. To entangle him (Matt. 22:15); i.e., to ensnare him. The term is properly used of snaring birds, but is used of ensnaring any person by difficult and artful questions. Their desire was not to elicit the truth, but that they might, if possible, get the True Witness to condemn himself (Ps. 59:3).—*Mimpriss.* A snare for getting him to say something that might be available against him, either with the Jewish people on the one hand, or with the Roman authorities on the other.—*Morison.* The snare was no longer laid in the sphere of rabbinical law, but in the more dangerous one of political obligation, that an ambiguous answer might compromise him before the Roman procurator. If they succeeded, it would at once transfer the odium of his arrest from themselves, insure his not being rescued, and make it possible to get him put to death, for the power of death was in Pilate's hands alone.—*Geikie.*

I. A Question about Our Duties as Citizens.—Vers. 14-17. 14. When they were come. The scheme has been agreed upon, and the hunters stealthily approach their game.—*Morison.* They say unto him. They evidently designed to raise the impression that a dispute had occurred between them and the Herodians, and that they desired to settle it by referring the decision of the question at issue to the final and higher authority of the great Prophet.—*Farrar.* Master, we know, etc. A hypocritical compliment, not believed by them, but artfully said, as compliments often are, to conceal their true design.—*Barnes.* There is something in this fawning malice and treacherous flattery almost as repulsive as the kiss of Judas.—*Cambridge Bible.* Thou art true; that is, ingenuous, honest, transparent. The word *true*, in Greek, is beautiful and suggestive,—*unconcealed, real.*—*Morison.* Carest for no man. What they here ascribe to him is not indifference or unconcern as to the welfare of others, but independence of their influence and authority, as motives for suppressing an unwelcome truth. The flattery here lies, not in the falsehood or extravagance of the description, but in the honesty with which they seem to comprehend themselves among those for whom he did not care in the sense above explained. As if they had said, "We come to you not only as a wise and famous teacher, but because we know that you will tell us to our faces what you think, without considering how it will affect us.—*Alexander.* Regardest not the person of men; i.e., Thou art not moved by external appearance: neither wealth, power, nor prestige will influence thy decision.—*Cambridge Bible.* As if one party should say, "You do not care for the Roman authorities;" the other, "You do not care for the authority of the Pharisees and Jewish rulers."—*Schaff.* To them is applicable the proverb which Alford quotes: "The Devil never lies so foully as when he tells the truth."—*Abbott.* It was the wolf putting on the sheep's clothing, under the vain idea of deceiving the shepherd.—*Ryle.* Teachest the way of God; i.e., the true doctrine. In truth. This was certainly hypocritical, for both the Pharisees and Herod condemned this teacher of truth.—*Schaff.* Next to hypocrisy in religion, there is nothing worse than hypocrisy in friendship.—*Bishop Hall.* Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not? "Tell us, therefore,"—since you are so wise, so true, so courageous,—"tell us, therefore, is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?" This tax, which we all so much detest, but the legality of which these Herodians support, ought we, or ought we not, to pay it? Which of us is in the right,—we who loathe and resent, or the Herodians who delight in it?—*Farrar.* The question was devised with so superlative a craft that it seemed impossible for our Lord to escape. If he said, "It is lawful,"

15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

17. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

shall we not give? But he, 15 knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they 16 brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's. And 17 Jesus said unto them, Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at

the Pharisees hoped at once to undermine his popularity with the multitude [as unfit to be the Messiah, the king of the Jews]. If he said, "It is not lawful" (Deut. 17:15), the Herodians could at once hand him over, as a traitor, to the secular power. — *Cambridge Bible*. Cesar was the official name of the Roman emperor. The reigning Cesar was Tiberius. The tribute, literally *census-money*, i.e., poll-tax, was paid by every Jew. It was inquisitorial, followed a careful taking of the census, in which every man was obliged to report his family, his property, and his income, and was extremely odious to the Jews, who counted it a badge of their national degradation. — *Abbott*. But the question addressed to our Lord derived its significance, not from the particular form of any of the taxes imposed by the victorious Romans. It drew deeper, — *Had any Gentile a right to tax the chosen people of God? Should any Jew recognize such a right? — Morrison*. Their motive now was not their usual hostility to Rome, but hatred of Christ. They actually afterwards accused him of forbidding to pay tribute (Luke 23:2); and the chief priests, from the same hatred of him, cried out, "We have no king but Cesar" (John 19:15). — *Schaff*.

15. He, knowing their hypocrisy. Jesus, who knows the hearts of all men, saw that they were mere flattering spies, and their question only a crafty device of hypocrites. — *Binney*. Tempt ye me? Seek to entrap, to ensnare me, by a question that is asked, not for information, but to lead into trouble. Bring me a penny. With what divine simplicity was their stratagem frustrated! A word lays bare the true character of the affected case of conscience and of those who proposed it; a single command that the tribute-money

be brought, and a single inquiry whose image it bore, — and the whole web of cunning and hypocrisy is rent in a moment. — *Ellicott*. A penny. Literally, a *denarius*, a Roman silver coin, equal to fifteen or sixteen cents of our money. — *P*. By requiring them to bring him the coin, he compels them to answer, tacitly, their own question; for the Jewish rabbis taught that, "where-soever the money of any king is current, there the inhabitants acknowledge that king for their lord" (*Light-foot*). — *Abbott*.



A PENNY.

16. Whose is this image? The little silver coin, bearing on its surface the head encircled with a wreath of laurel, and bound round with the sacred fillet, — the well-known features, the most beautiful and the most wicked, even in outward expression, of all the Roman emperors, with the superscription running round, in the stately language of imperial Rome, *Tiberius Cesar, Divi Augusti filius Augustus, Imperator*. — *Maclear*. Superscription. The name, etc., on the coin.

17. Render. The word *render* implies the notion of *moral duty* toward Cesar quite as much as toward God. — *Godet*. To Cesar. Rather, here, *give back to Cesar*. They ask, Is it lawful to *give*? he replies, *Give back*. Since they accepted in the coinage of Cesar the benefits of his government, they were bound to *give back* a recompense in tribute. So long as the citizen accepts the benefit of a government, he owes it allegiance and obedience. — *Abbott*. And to God the things that are God's. Not the temple tribute merely, but all things. As the acceptance of Cesar's government involves the duty of tax-paying to him, so the acceptance of every good and perfect gift from above involves the duty of supreme allegiance to God. — *Abbott*. The face of the penny answered their question. It did more: it suggested a beautiful analogy, too forcible to be omitted. As the penny bore the stamp of Cesar, so does the human heart bear the stamp of God. As the penny should be rendered to Cesar, in honest, ungrudging payment, so should the homage of man's heart be rendered with willing soul to its maker, — God. — *Cowles*. Had they but fulfilled that acknowledged obligation, had they been but true to the spirit and laws of their own ancient government, no Roman soldier had ever invaded their borders, no Roman governor had sat in the hall of judgment at Jerusalem. It was their own failure in rendering to God the things that were his. — *Hanna*. There were many dues which God required at their

18. ¹ Then come unto him the Sadducees, ² which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19. Master, ³ Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also,

him. And there come unto 18 him Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, 19 If a man's brother die, and leave a wife behind him, and leave no child, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were seven brethren: 20 and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed; and the 21 second took her, and died, leaving no seed behind him; and the third likewise: and 22 the seven left no seed. Last of all the woman also died.

¹ Matt. 22:23. Luke 20:27. ² Acts 23:8. ³ Deut. 25:5.

hands, which they might easily pay if they were inclined. Honor, love, obedience, faith, fear, prayer, spiritual worship, were payments to God which they might daily make, and payments with which the Roman government did not interfere. — *Ryle*. Even in relation to God, infinite though he be, they should not be receivers only. For, even in relation to God, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." — *Morison*. Because we are to render to God the things that are God's, we are to render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, for Cesar is of God; but when Cesar requires what God forbids, we are to disobey. For illustration of the duty of obedience to human law, see Rom. 13:1-7. 1 Cor. 7:21-24. Eph. 6:5-8. Col. 3:22-25. 1 Pet. 2:13-17. For illustration of the duty of disobedience, under the higher law of allegiance to God, see Dan. 3:18; 6:10. Acts 4:19; 5:29. — *Abbott*. The Saviour thus, instead of leaping into the thicket of a petty political question of the day, ascended a peak of moral thought, and legislated for all peoples and persons, in all places and times. — *Morison*. "Render unto God the things that are God's." Have you ever taken pains to think how much ground of your heart and your life that covers? What are these "things that are God's"? What share has he; what rights of ownership, creation, preservation; what title, what claims, in your bodily strength, in your time, in your real or personal estate, in your mind and its education; in your tongue and its speech, in your business and its profits, in your social influence and its motives, in your home happiness and the fruits of it? — *F. D. Huntington, D.D.* They marvelled greatly at him. These young Pharisees (Matthew) and Herodians with feigned scruples of conscience, the flower of the youth of Jerusalem, scarcely expected such a blow from a Galilean; and their astonishment was more than momentary. No wonder: the answer of Christ is the wisest ever given to an entangling question, and contains in principle the solution of the great problem of Church and State, or the relation of the spiritual and secular power. — *Schaff*.

II. **A Question as to Our Future Existence.** — Vers. 18-27. 18. **Then come unto him the Sadducees.** The Sadducees were the materialists and infidels of the first century. — *Abbott*. They were comparatively few in number, but wealthy and powerful. All the leading families of high priests at this period were Sadducees; and — except where it comes into *direct collision* with religion — epicurean worldliness is more tolerant than interested fanaticism. — *Cambridge Bible*. This is the only direct contact of the Sadducees with Jesus. **No resurrection.** Compare Acts 23:8, where their views are shown to include a denial of the immortality of the soul as well as the resurrection of the body. (They also denied the existence of angels). — *Schaff*. **Asked him, saying.** Their question was inspired less by deadly hatred than by supercilious scorn. — *Cambridge Bible*. In ridicule of the doctrine, and of Christ himself; for they felt that their question was unanswerable.

19. **Master, Moses wrote, etc.** (Deut. 25:5, 6). This law was given by Moses in order to keep the families and tribes of the Israelites distinct, and to perpetuate them. — *Barnes*. The case was doubtless an imaginary one, invented for the purpose of presenting an objection to the doctrine of a future life, — an illustration of the spirit of much modern theological controversy. — *Abbott*. Thus they begin, and are proving beyond contradiction (although cunningly, scarce suppressing a smile, they afterwards only put a *question*), that this Moses, in this, as in all his laws, cannot possibly pre-suppose a resurrection. — *Thomas*. **Should take his wife.** This is sometimes called the "levirate law," from Latin *levir*, a brother-in-law. The law on this subject is not peculiar to the Jews, but is found amongst various Oriental nations, ancient and modern. — *Speaker's Commentary*, Deut. 25:5. **Raise up seed unto his brother.** That is, the children shall be reckoned

23. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?

25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but ¹are as the angels which are in heaven.

In the resurrection whose wife ²³ shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. Jesus ²⁴ said unto them, Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God? For ²⁵ when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but

¹ 1 Cor. 15: 42, 49, 52.

in the genealogy of the deceased brother; or, to all civil purposes shall be considered as his. — *Barnes*.

23. In the resurrection. This word is, in this conversation of our Lord, of more extensive meaning than simply *the rising again of the body*: it also denotes *future life*; that is, the continued life of the soul while separated from the body. — *Ripley*. **Whose wife shall she be of them?** One wife to seven husbands was not to be thought of: it must make the resurrection state a nullity, — this practical difficulty being quite insurmountable. — *Cowles*.

24. Jesus answering. Though the question came upon him most unexpectedly, his answer was everlastingly memorable. It opened the gates of paradise so widely that men might see therein more than they had ever seen before; and it furnished against one of the commonest forms of disbelief an argument that neither rabbi nor prophet had conceived. — *Farrar*. **Do ye not err** (is it not for this cause ye err) **because ye know not?** i.e., do not understand (1) the scriptures, which affirm the doctrine; nor (2) the power of God, which is able to effect the resurrection, and after the resurrection to create a new order of things in the new world. — *Cambridge Bible*. With them as with the Pharisees, he struck at the root, and traced their errors to ignorance of the Scriptures and of the omnipotence of God. Had they known the Scriptures, he showed them, not only in the letter but the spirit, they could not fail to see a necessary connection between the faith revealed there, and the doctrine of an eternal, individual life for man. Had they known the omnipotence of God, they would not have supposed that the forms and relations of the present life must be preserved in the future. God could bestow the new existence in a far different, nay, in a glorified form. — *Neander*. Two frequent causes of religious error are here hinted at: first, a failure to understand the Scripture, which we often read as they did, either superficially and carelessly, or blinded by our theological prejudices; second, a failure to realize the power of God, it being a common error to limit the divine power to those forms of exercise with which we are acquainted. Observe the fact that the Bible expressly rests the doctrine of the resurrection on the exercise of *divine power* (Acts 26:8. Rom. 4:17; 8:11. 1 Cor. 6:14). — *Abbott*.

25. **When they rise.** Rise from the dead at the resurrection. How much more, then, will the words he speaks be true of the good in the life to come, between death and the resurrection! But *when they rise*, seems to imply simply their existence after death, the future life. **Neither marry:** spoken of the man. — *Schaff*. **Nor are given in marriage.** This has reference to the customs of the Jews, that the female members of the family were given in marriage by their father. — *Lange*. This relation is not to be re-established in the state after the resurrection, because those raised up are as the angels in heaven. Compare especially the fuller answer in Luke 20:35, 36. There the immortality is brought out; as there is no death there, there will be no birth there [for the renewal of the race]. — *Schaff*. **But are as the angels . . . in heaven.** This answer opposes another error of the Sadducees, — a denial of the existence of angels. — *Schaff*. In the future life no such relations as that of husband and wife existed, but a higher and more perfect nature would be taken. — *Kitto*. *But are as the angels in heaven.* Luke says they are equal unto the angels. This declaration does not imply that the angels are the spirits of the departed: on the contrary, it discriminates between the two, for it compares the one to the other. Nor does it imply that there is no recognition of friends in heaven and no perpetuation of friendship. Nor does it involve the literal resurrection of the earthly body: on the contrary, it implies a radical difference between the celestial and the terrestrial body. — *Abbott*. His words teach absolutely the absence from the resurrection life of the definite physical relations on which marriage rests in this, and they suggest an answer to the yearning questions which rise up in our minds as we ponder on the things behind the veil. Will there, we ask, be no continuance there of the holiest of the ties of earth? Will the husband and the wife, who

26. And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying,¹ *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?*

27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

are as angels in heaven. But 26 as touching the dead, that they are raised; have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: ye do greatly err.

¹ Exod. 3: 6.

have loved each other until death parted them, be no more to each other than any others who are counted worthy to obtain that life? Will there be no individual recognition, no continuance of the love founded upon the memories of the past? The answer to all such questionings is found in dwelling on the "power of God." The old relations may subsist under new conditions. Things that are incompatible here may there be found to co-exist. The saintly wife of two saintly husbands may love both with an angelic, and therefore a pure and unimpaired, affection. The contrast between our Lord's teaching and the sensual paradise of Mahomet, or Swedenborg's dream of the marriage-state perpetuated under its earthly conditions, is so obvious as hardly to call for notice. — *Plumptre*. In that heaven beyond the grave, though love remains, yet all the mere earthlinesses of human relationship are superseded and transfigured. — *Farrar*. In all true married life here, that which is most beautiful, most perfect, most entrancing, is the spiritual, the love of the heart, transfiguring the earthly as the sun of heaven glorifies the clouds at sunset, or forms upon the falling drops the radiant beauties of the rainbow. The power of this spiritual love grows with time, as the earthly fades; and this, the best part of married love, must remain after death, and be enthroned there. — *P*. Two things are abundantly clear from this description respecting the saints in glory. For one thing, their happiness is not a carnal happiness, but a spiritual one; for another, their happiness shall be eternal. — *Ryle*.

26. Have ye not read in the book of Moses? They drew their argument from the books of Moses, and he finds his proof in the same. — *Lange*. Jesus appeals to the Pentateuch, when arguing with the Sadducees, with whom the books of Moses had the greatest authority. — *Cambridge Bible*. How in the bush God spake unto him. At the bush, signifying the place in Exodus. (See Revised.) The passage occurs in connection with the appearance of Jehovah to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3: 6, 15), which was itself a striking symbol of the power of God to preserve what in the course of nature must perish. — *Alford*. I am the God of Abraham, etc. Observe that both here and in Exodus the language is in the present tense: *I am* the God of Abraham. — *Abbott*. He cannot be the God of non-entities, non-existences. If he is their God they are his people, and, of course, must be in existence, and not out of existence. A covenant exists between themselves and God, — a fact which carries with it the actual existence of both parties, as truly the human party as the divine. So the whole Sadducean doctrine broke down. — *Coules*. This does not prove the resurrection at the great day; but it does prove the resurrection state, the life beyond the grave, which is the essential basis of the resurrection, and makes it possible. The essential question is not the mode of future existence, but the fact. — *P*. The words, "I am the God of," refer to the covenant between God and the patriarchs. "Part of this covenant," writes Mr. G. Warrington, "was the possession of the land which was promised to Abraham and his seed. Yet Abraham did not obtain this promise. The solution of this paradox is to be found in Heb. 11, where it is laid down that Abraham looked for 'a heavenly country,' i.e., he looked to obtain God's promise of 'the land,' not in an earthly but in a heavenly fashion. In other words, he looked for a resurrection life to come. This faith of Abraham, in believing the sureness of God's promise when its accomplishment seemed impossible, was exactly what God required of Moses and the Israelites when he spoke the words in question, and it was to such as had this faith that the promise should come true. Therefore he proclaimed himself as the God of Abraham, etc., regarding Abraham not only as still alive, but as still looking for the realization in bodily (albeit heavenly) life, of his promise about the land." — *Eugene Stock*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Eugene Stock's *Lessons on the Life of our Lord*, pp. 205-207. Hanna's, Geikie's, and Farrar's *Life of Christ*. Sermons, by H. W. Beecher, vol. 5, "The Heavenly State;" by E. Payson, "The Equality of Men with Angels." See also Warren's *Parousia*, and Sears's *Foregleams*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The image and superscription of God. In the United States Mint is an instrument resembling a hand, which is filled with blank pieces of metal, and carries them to a die which stamps them one by one with a clear and beautiful impress, and thus changes them into coins which bear the mark and authorization of the government. So it is that every good thing comes to us with the image of God upon it, and the superscription of his love. There is nothing good in our lives but is thus marked as from heaven, and demands that we return our tributes of love to him. — *P.*

II. The resurrection life. The life beyond death has been compared to the butterfly life, as developing new powers and beauties beyond that of the old caterpillar life. Paul's comparison is more perfect, and we can trust it, for it is given by inspiration of God. This life is like the seed; that, like the plant that grows from the seed. Who would dream that all the life and beauty of an oak was enclosed in the acorn? Who would imagine that the radiance and fragrance of the rose could develop from the seed of the rose, or the brilliance of a tulip from a bulb? Our powers and enjoyments will not in that world be of the same kind as here, so far as pertains to our bodies; but they will be as much greater and more perfect, as the carnation is beyond the black seed, or the spiritual body beyond this physical body. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 14. Bad men will speak the truth, which they believe to be only flattery, in order to gain their ends.

2. Ver. 17. If we live in a country, enjoying its privileges, we should cheerfully pay our taxes, and give the service due.

3. Duties to our country are enforced, not interfered with, by religion; the better Christians, the better citizens.

4. Loyalty to country teaches loyalty to God.

5. We are bound to obey and love God so long as we use the life, the earth, the air, the sun, and all the good things God gives us.

6. Ver. 18. Unbelievers are apt to ask curious questions to puzzle men with, and overlook the great mass of positive evidence for Christianity.

7. Ver. 24. Much religious error comes from ignorance of the Bible.

8. Nearly all doubt as to particular things would vanish if we realized the power of God.

9. Vers. 25, 26. There is great comfort and power in the assurance of a future life.

10. And not only a future life, but one of great joy, blessedness, and power, — "like the angels."

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

There is no one subject to this lesson; but we find **QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, AND JESUS' ANSWERS TO THEM.** (1) *The questioners*, vers. 13, 14, 18. (2) *A question about our duties as citizens*, vers. 14, 15. The two parties among the Jews, and how an answer in favor of either party would bring Jesus into trouble. (3) *Jesus' answer*, vers. 15-17. Perfect, clear, but escaping from their trap. Our obligations to our country, and the foundation of them. The application of the same principle to our relation to God's government. (4) *A question about the future life*, vers. 18-23. The point of the difficulty. (5) *Jesus' answer*, vers. 24-27. The true doctrine about the life to come.

LESSON X. — SEPTEMBER 3.

LOVE TO GOD AND MEN. — MARK 12:28-44.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* — DEUT. 6:5.

TIME. — A. D. 30. Tuesday, April 4 (12th Nisan).

PLACE. — The temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Vers. 28-34 (scribe's question), with Matt. 22:34-40; vers. 35-37 (Son of David), with Matt. 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44; vers. 38, 39 (warnings), with Luke 20:45, 46; ver. 40 (woes), with Matt. 23:13; Luke 20:47; vers. 41-44 (widow's mite), with Luke 21:1-4.

28. ¶ ¹ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, ² Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

And one of the scribes came, 28 and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy

¹ Matt. 22:35. ² Deut. 6:4. Luke 10:27.

INTRODUCTION.

"The sectarian feeling of the Pharisees was gratified to see their old antagonists, the Sadducees, so completely worsted in the argument on the resurrection," as reported in our last lesson. The brilliant answer of Jesus to them suggests to a scribe to ask his opinion on one more disputed point.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Last Question of the Pharisees.**—Vers. 28-34. 28. **One of the scribes.** The scribes were learned men, skilled in the Jewish law. They preserved, copied, and expounded the law. They were called by Jewish writers "the schoolmasters of the nation." They are also called lawyers. Many were Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrim. **Came.** Approached: he stepped forward from the multitude, and addressed our Lord. **Having heard them reasoning together.** He had listened to the discussion between our Lord and the Sadducees.—*Morison*. **Perceiving that he had answered them.** The Sadducees. **Well.** Rightly and aptly, admirably. **Asked.** Matthew (22:35) adds, *tempting him*. Not perhaps maliciously, but in the sense of testing on another question the wisdom of one who answered a previous question so admirably. I judge that he was neither a caviller, nor a disciple, but one curious to see what reply Christ would make to one of the puzzling theological problems of the day.—*Abbott*. **Which is the first commandment of all?** First in importance: the primary, leading commandment, the most fundamental one. This was a question which, with some others, divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools (*J. F. and B.*), and was a constant bone of contention,—one of those "strivings about the law" against which St. Paul warns Titus (Tit. 3:9).—*Stock*. The Jews divided the commandments of their law into *greater* and *lesser*; but they were not agreed in the particulars. Some contended for the law of circumcision; others, for that of sacrifice; others, for that of phylacteries.

29. **Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.** Our Lord begins with the creed of Israel. This passage (Deut. 6:4-9) was one of the four places of Scripture inscribed on the phylacteries.—*Cook*. It was called the Shemà. To say the Shemà, was a passport into paradise for any child of Abraham.—*Ellicott*. This every devout Jew recited twice every day; and they do it to this day, thus keeping up the great ancient national protest against the polytheisms and pantheisms of the heathen world, the great utterance of the national faith in one living and personal God.—*David Brown*. This mighty text contains far more than a mere declaration that God is one. It asserts that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other. The last letter of the first and last word are written large in the Hebrew, which the Jewish commentators make highly significant.—*A. Gosman*.

30. **Thou shalt love.** We have here the language of *law*, expressive of God's *claims*. What, then, are we here bound down to do? One word is made to express it. And what a word!—**LOVE**. Had the essence of the divine law consisted in *deeds*, it could not possibly have been expressed in a single word; for no one deed is comprehensive of all others embraced in the law. But, as it consists in *an affection of the soul*, one word suffices to express it—but only one. But love is an *all-inclusive* affection, embracing not only every other affection proper to its object, but all that is proper to be *done* to its object; for, as love spontaneously seeks to please its object, so, in the case of men to God, it is the native well-spring

31. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, ¹Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

strength. The second is this, ³¹Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than

¹ Lev. 19:18. Matt. 22:39. Rom. 13:9. Gal. 5:14. Jas. 2:8.

of a voluntary obedience. It is, besides, the most *personal* of all affections. One may fear an *event*, one may hope for an *event*, one may rejoice in an *event*; but one can love only a *person*. It is the *tenderest*, the most *unselfish*, the most *divine*, of all affections. Such, then, is the affection in which the essence of the divine law is declared to consist. — *Brown*. **The Lord thy God**; i.e., Jehovah, the self-existent One, who has revealed himself as the "I AM," and there is "*none else*," who, though by his name Jehovah apparently at an unapproachable distance from his finite creatures, yet bears to *thee* a real and definite relationship, out of which arises *his claim and thy duty* — of love. — *Brown*. He that loves God loves all that is good, for God is the sum of all good. **Heart, soul, mind, strength**. We may understand this fourfold enumeration as a command to devote all the faculties to the love of God. — *Cook*. **Heart** denotes in general terms the affection and will; affectionate choice, "the love of conscious resolve, expressed with will, which must at once become a second nature." **Soul** is the individual existence, the person himself, the seat of the will, disposition, desires, character. The two words are united to teach that the entire, undivided person must share in that which it has to perform with the heart. — *Cremer's Biblico-Theol. Lexicon*. **With all thy mind**. This commands our intellectual nature: "Thou shalt put *intelligence* into thine affection" — in opposition to a blind devotion, or mere devoteism. **With all thy strength**. Enjoins the full and entire devotion of all these powers. — *Cook*. Such is the "first" of the commandments, in the order of importance. Obedience to it would turn our earth into a paradise. The striving toward it, consciously or unconsciously, is the secret of all the civilization that has hitherto been realized. — *Morison*. It deserves remark, that the tongue, which is so often the only instrument of professing love to God, is not here mentioned. — *Smith*. The command of the text cannot be surpassed in comprehensiveness by any which God can give or man receive. The New Testament itself can require no more than this total self-surrender of man's being to his Maker. — *Cook*. It is clear also, from the reference of our Lord to this command, that the law and the gospel do not differ as an outward and carnal service [differs] from an inward and spiritual one. Love holds the same prominence in both, but the gospel gives new and peculiar motives to enforce this love. — *A. Gosman, D.D.*

31. **The second is like**. To complete the lesson, and to leave no room for perverse distinctions between duties to God and man, our Lord makes the second commandment the necessary result and complement of the first. — *Smith*. The first is the sun, so to speak, of the spiritual life; this the *lesser* light, which reflects the shining of that other. It is *like* to it inasmuch as both are *laws of love*; both deduced from the great and highest love; both dependent on "I am the Lord thy God." — *Alford*. Supreme love to God is to manifest itself in love to men. Alike binding, the two are correspondent, not contradictory. — *Schaff*. We take nothing from God when we love our neighbor for his sake. — *Quesnel*. **Thy neighbor**. On "who is my neighbor?" see Luke 10:25-37, and Jas. 1:27. — *Abbott*. The words were found, strangely enough, in the book which is for the most part ceremonial (Lev. 19:18). **As thyself**. (1) Not as he *does* love himself, but as he *ought* to love himself. (2) After the same manner; i.e., freely and readily, sincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and perseveringly. — *Burkitt*. Cases arise where man ought to love his neighbor more than his life, — physical life, — and has done so, sacrificing it for his fellows, his country, and the Church, in imitation of the example of Christ and the martyrs. — *Schaff*. It is by love, as Christ defines it here, that the soul lives in harmony with God; by love, as Paul defines it in 1 Cor. chap. 13, that he is to live in harmony with his fellow-men; and by love that he is to secure harmony in himself. But this love is not merely an emotion, or sentiment, or an impulse, but a principle, which, seated in the *heart*, rules the *life*, inspires the *mind*, and imparts *strength* to the whole man. Observe, that the religion of Jesus Christ does not call for the suppression of man's powers, but for the highest conceivable inspiration and activity of the whole being, under the summer influence of love, and this the highest conceivable form of love, — love received from and going out to God. — *Abbott*. **None other commandment greater**. The unity of the moral law prevents any discrimination between its precepts: it is *one* law of love, the hinge of the whole Old Testament revelation. There can be none greater. No one can love God without loving his fellow-men, and no one can truly love man without loving God. The former is the source of the latter. Hence the first table (the first five commandments) enjoins love to God; the second table (the last five commandments), love to our neighbor. — *Schaff*.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; ¹ and there is none other but he:

33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbor as himself, ² is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. ³ And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

35. ¶ And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36. For David himself said ⁴ by the Holy Ghost, ⁵ The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

these. And the scribe said un-³² to him, Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him³³ with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he³⁴ answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

And Jesus answered and³⁵ said, as he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the³⁶ Holy Spirit,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies
the footstool of thy feet.

¹ Deut. 4:39. Isa. 45:6, 14; 46:9. ² 1 Sam. 15:22. Hos. 6:6. Mic. 6:6, 7, 8. ³ Matt. 22:46.
⁴ Matt. 22:41. Luke 20:41. ⁵ 2 Sam. 23:2. Ps. 110:1.

This was the last lesson of positive doctrine that our Saviour taught in public. He had begun his ministry by declaring that he came to fulfil the law and the prophets: he closed it by announcing that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Scarcely less interesting than the truth itself is the effect it had on the hearers. — *Smith*.

32. The scribe said unto him, Well (rightly, admirably), Master. Mark alone records the effect of our Lord's answer upon the scribe. It came home to his heart with convincing power. Doubtless he never before saw so plainly the deep spiritual truths of these commands. Entering into our Lord's reply, he cannot but express his approval and even admiration. — *Clark*.

33. Burnt offerings and sacrifices. The scribe gathers up in his reply some of the great utterances of the prophets, which prove the superiority of love to God and man over all mere ceremonial observances. (See 1 Sam. 15:22. Ps. 51. Hos. 6:6. Mic. 6:6-8.) — *Cambridge Bible*. It was a bold saying in those times, and in that place. — *Schaff*.

34. Discreetly. With knowledge and understanding. Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. This man had hold of that principle in which law and gospel are one. He stood, as it were, at the door of the kingdom of God. He only wanted (but the want was indeed a serious one) repentance and faith to be *within* it. The Lord shows us here, that even outside his flock those who can answer discreetly, who have knowledge of the *spirit* of the great command of law and gospel, are nearer to being of his flock than the formalists; but then, as Bengel adds, "If thou art not far off, enter: otherwise it were better that thou wert far off." — *Alford*. No man . . . durst. No other attempt was henceforth made to entangle the Redeemer by replies to subtle questions: "all alike kept aloof from One from whom chief priests and rabbis equally went away humbled." — *Cambridge Bible*.

II. Jesus asks them a Question. — Vers. 35-37. 35. Jesus answered. He asks a question in reply to all their attacks upon him. And said. He seems to have turned to a number of Pharisees (Matt. 22:41), who had collected together to converse, probably over the day's discomfiture (*Maclear*), or to meditate a new method of attack. How say the scribes? The question here given was preceded, according to Matthew, by a question addressed to the Pharisees, "What do you think respecting the Christ? of whom is he the Son?" As if he had said, "You deny that I am the Messiah, because I have not come as you expect the Messiah to come. Now you tell me about the Messiah, and see if your views are according to Scripture." They answer that he is the Son of David. Then Christ asks, "How say the scribes that Christ — rather *the* Christ, the expected Messiah (as in the Revised) — is the Son of David?" This was the common opinion; and it was true (Luke 1:32. Rom. 1:3), but not the whole truth. It was not generally believed that the Messiah should be divine. Jesus was condemned for blasphemy in calling himself the Son of God. In this colloquy he proves out of the Scripture that the Messiah of prophecy was to be the Son of God. — *Abbott*. On this one-sided view of the Messiah, as a descendant of David, their king and warrior, their false political hopes had been based. — *Schaff*.

36. David himself said. The Pharisees are referred to the one hundred and tenth

37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38. ¶ And ¹he said unto them in his doctrine, ²Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and ³love salutations in the marketplaces,

David himself calleth him ³⁷ Lord; and whence is he his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

And in his teaching he said, ³⁸ Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the

¹ Mark 4:2. ² Matt. 23:1, etc. Luke 20:46. ³ Luke 11:43.

Psalm, which the rabbis regarded as distinctly Messianic. — *Cambridge Bible*. In later Jewish writings, nearly every verse of it is quoted as referring to the Messiah. — *Perowne on the Psalms*. This passage (Ps. 110) is more frequently referred to in the New Testament than any other. In the Holy Ghost. A weighty declaration, by our Lord, of the inspiration of the prophetic Scriptures. — *Alford*. The Lord said to my Lord. The Lord said; in Hebrew, *Jehovah said*. To my Lord; that is, to my Superior or Sovereign. When King David thus spoke he had been anticipatively rapt into the far future. He was gazing — though most likely he knew it not — on a scene that was consequent on the death, burial, and resurrection of his illustrious descendant. The scene is laid in heaven, and its chronology is coincident with the triumphal ascension of our Lord. While David gazed on the royal personage whom Jehovah welcomed to his side, he forgot his own little royalty, and spoke as the humblest seer that ever lived might have spoken, — “Jehovah said to my Lord.” — *Morison*. Sit thou on my right hand. A place of the highest honor (1 Kings 2:19. 1 Sam. 20:25. Matt. 20:21). Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Putting the feet on captives taken in war was a common Oriental method of symbolizing complete triumph over them (Josh. 10:24. 2 Sam. 22:41). Parallel to this promise is 1 Cor. 15:25, and Heb. 10:13. — *Abbott*.

37. Whence is he then his son? From what source shall we seek an explanation of the fact that he is his son? Or, perhaps, simply, “How can he be his son?” Could Abraham have called Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, or any of his own descendants near or remote, his Lord? If not, how came David to do so? There could be but one answer, — because that son would be divine, not human, — David’s son by human birth, but David’s Lord by divine subsistence. — *Farrar*. The bright vision that had floated for ages before the eyes of the people was that of a king who was to raise the Jewish commonwealth to supremacy over the nations, — the vision of an earthly, visible, world-wide monarchy to be set up by the son of David. It was this vision, baseless as it was bright, which Jesus seeks to dissipate by putting to them his pointed inquiry. — *Hanna*. The only possible answer was that full admission of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, which would have identified him in all points with Jesus; and, rather than confess this, their obstinate silence rejected the last opportunity of offered grace. — *Smith*. The common people. Literally, “And the great multitude,” i.e., the great mass of the people. — *Cook*. Heard him gladly. With keen relish, with delight. Not merely in the general sense, but with special reference to his divine dignity as the Messiah. The masterliness of the reasoning would tell. The power of the speaking would tell. The transparent elevation and earnestness of the character would tell. And, overarching all, there would be a certain indescribable grandeur of spirit which would make them feel exalted, as toward God and heaven, in the very act of hearing. — *Morison*.

III. Warnings against the Scribes. — Ver. 38. 38. He said unto them. Both to the multitude and his disciples (see Matthew and Luke). In his doctrine. Teaching. Beware of the scribes. (The scribes were mostly Pharisees.) Be on your guard in reference to them. Literally, look from them. Look for a way of escape from the onset of their influence. — *Morison*. The most unsparing denunciations against false, hypocritical teachers, recorded in the Bible, are given fully by Matthew. From these Mark has a few salient points. He signalizes the most prominent characteristics of the scribes belonging to the Pharisaic party, — ostentation, arrogance, rapacity, and, as the climax of all, religious hypocrisy. — *Cook*. Christ’s voice, as heard on earth, was not always one of gentleness and love. Yet no mingling here of sinful human passion, no absence even of love. Lightning lurks amid the warm soft drops of the summer shower: a consuming fire may come out of the very heart of love. — *Hanna*. Love to go in long clothing. Literally, in stoles, long robes reaching to the feet, such as ladies of rank were accustomed to wear, and kings, and nobles, and certain priests, and other high personages. — *Morison*. They took pleasure in the display, showing themselves off in the chief places of concourse. Salutations. They loved appellations of honor and respect, such as “Rabbi, Father, Master, Teacher.” Men often profess a desire to magnify their office, when in truth they want to magnify themselves. — *Ryle*. Marketplaces. Any thoroughfare, open place, or

39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts :

40. ¹ Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers : these shall receive greater damnation.

41. ¶ ² And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast ³ money ⁴ into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in much.

marketplaces, and chief seats ³⁹ in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts : they which ⁴⁰ devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers ; these shall receive greater condemnation.

And he sat down ⁴¹ over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in

¹ Matt. 23 : 14. ² Luke 21 : 1. ³ See Matt. 10 : 9. ⁴ 2 Kings 12 : 9.

public square, where people met together for business or conversation. They loved these greetings in the most public places. — *Clark.*

39. **And the chief seats in the synagogues.** At the upper end of the synagogue stood the ark or chest containing the Book of the Law. This portion of the synagogue answered to the chancel in a modern church. Near it were the *chief seats*, which were usually occupied by the elders of the synagogue. Compare with Christ's condemnation of the Pharisees here, Jas. 2 : 2, 3. — *Abbott.* **The uppermost rooms** (places) ; i.e., "the most honorable seats." The Jews, like the Romans, reclined at meals on couches, called *triclinia*, each containing three seats, and each seat having its special dignity. — *Cambridge Bible.*

40. **Devour widows' houses.** Like cunning yet ferocious beasts, they devoured the substance of widows, who were the most defenceless of the poor, and the most deserving of sympathy and kindness. *Houses* is here used for *possessions, property*. They influenced widows to give them of their property, as an act of piety, or to bequeath it to them. As spiritual advisers, and sometimes as the executors of their wills and the guardians of their children, they could rob widows of their property. **For a pretence, make long prayers.** They made religion a mask in order to gain the confidence and the property of even the most helpless. Some of the rabbins would pray nine hours a day. **Greater condemnation.** Implying a most terrible punishment as a consequence. For the double sin of hypocrisy and fraudulent injustice, they should meet a terrible doom. — *Clark.* Observe that here are condemned (1) the spirit that is more scrupulous concerning the outward ceremonials than the inward spirit of religion (ver. 38) ; (2) that which covets the praise of men more than honor from God (ver. 38 ; compare Matt. 6 : 1-5, 16-18) ; (3) social pride and vain-glory (ver. 39 ; compare Luke 14 : 7-11) ; (4) the concealment of practical selfishness by a pretence of piety (ver. 40 ; compare Isa. 1 : 10-15). — *Abbott.*

IV. **The Widow's Mites.** — Vers. 41-44. This narrative of the poor widow is to be taken in its connection with the discourse to the Pharisees just given. It places their hypocrisy and avarice in the most glaring light. They were religious for a pretence, she in whole-hearted sincerity. *They* for gain, *she* with consecration of all she had to her Lord. In the midst of their profanations of his temple, by avarice, he notices this pious act of a widow such as they robbed. — *Jacobus.*

41. **Jesus sat** (probably to rest) **over against** (opposite) **the treasury.** A name given by the rabbins to thirteen chests, called trumpets from their shape, which stood in the court of the women, at the entrance to the treasure-chamber. "Nine chests were for the appointed temple-tribute, and for the sacrifice-tribute, that is, money-gifts instead of the sacrifices ; four chests for freewill-offerings, for wood, incense, temple-decoration, and burnt-offerings." — *Lightfoot.* **Beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.** The original indicates that he was purposely observing the people, studying their action and characters. Christ still keeps like watch in his Church (see Rev. 1 : 13). — *Abbott.* Before the passover, freewill-offerings, in addition to the temple-tax, were generally presented. — *Lange.*

42. **A certain poor widow.** The word rendered "poor" is a very strong



TREASURY-BOX.

42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43. And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ¹this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44. For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, ²*even* all her living.

much. And there came a ⁴² poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him ⁴³ his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they which are casting into the treasury: for they ⁴⁴ all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

¹ 2 Cor. 8: 12. ² Deut. 24: 6. 1 John 3: 17.

one, nearly equivalent to "beggar." It implies utter destitution. — *Cook*. Here, as in other places in the Bible, we must remember the exceedingly depressed and dependent condition of a poor man's widow in the countries where our Lord was. The expression is almost proverbial for one very badly off, and most unlikely to contribute anything to a charitable purpose. — *Ryle*. **Two mites.** The smallest of Jewish coins, about the value of one-fifth of a cent. It took its name from its extreme smallness, being derived from an adjective signifying *thin, subtle*. — *Owen*. **A farthing.** Mark (not Luke) adds for his Roman readers an explanation, using a Greek word (taken from the Latin) meaning the fourth part, as our word "farthing" does. — *Schaff*. The value is only of importance as showing upon how minute a gift our Lord pronounced this splendid panegyric, which might well be envied by a Cræsus or a Rothschild. — *Alexander*.

43. Called . . . his disciples. Our Lord directed their special attention to this act of the widow. It is not said that the gifts of the others were worthless. Many possessed, no doubt, no worth (Matt. 6: 1); others, a greater or a less. — *Cambridge*. **Cast more in than all.** Note the word *more*, — proportionally, to wit, to her means, and thus *more* in the estimation of God, who measures quantity by quality. — *Morison*.

44. **For.** The worth of a gift is to be determined, not by its intrinsic value, but by *what it costs* the giver. The measure of that cost is what is *left*, not what is given. — *Schaff*. **All they did cast in of their abundance.** Their offerings were *the overflowings* of (the cup of) *their* abundance [such is the force of the original Greek], but her gift was *of her want* or *deficiency of means*. — *Owen*. This poor widow's gift, compared with the great and splendid gifts of the rich, was more than theirs, — because it meant more self-sacrifice, more real love, than all the other money offerings which Jesus saw thrown in. In this lay its superlative merit. This, and only this, made it great in the sight of God. — *Cowles*. But in these days more people give "*mites*" out of their vast superfluity, — which is no charity at all; and they talk of these offerings as "*mites*," as though that word excused and even consecrated an offering miserably inadequate. — *Cambridge Bible*. **All that she had, . . . all her living.** Out of her want, out of her destitution, she has cast in all that (in cash) she possessed, — her whole (present) means of subsistence. — *Meyer*. In love she devoted all to God, with strong faith in his providential care. — *Clark*. God will not refuse the poor offerings of poor people, but he will not accept the poor offerings of the rich. — *Bishop Medley*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **The widow's mite, on modern missionary ground.** (1) Rev. Mr. Browne, of the Harpoot (Turkey) mission, writes: "Never before have I seen a more utterly disheartening state of things, physical, political, economic; yet have I never seen among the different communities such earnestness, such painful self-denial, which in many cases amounts to pure heroism, as during the past year. These people amaze me! They give money till they scrimp themselves in the very necessities of life. They go ragged, and give.

They look pinched and hungry, and still give. They go home and hunt up any little superfluous thing, a garment or ornament; and away they go to the market, and sell it, and come and lay it at our feet, lamenting they have *no more* to give." — *Missionary Herald, August, 1881.* (2) Rev. Mr. Jones, of the Madura mission in India, describes three families in an obscure village in his field, who were trying to live a Christian life, and who brought some money in order to obtain a catechist to preach to them. "They brought it in three little baskets, each about the size of one's fist. Two were full of small coin; and the other one was brought by the helpless leper, and contained only one cent and a half. But looking at his joy as he hobbled toward me and handed it to me, and seeing that he was clothed with only a small cloth which was literally hanging in shreds around his loins, and barely enough to cover his nakedness, the story of the widow and her mite came home to me as it never did before. That widow could not have been more impoverished than this leper is, nor could she have given with more of an apparent *abandon* than he did. And, as I received the other two baskets, I was very much surprised when I found the contents to be one dollar and a quarter. To appreciate the amount of this you need to remember that the heads of these three families never earn more than ten cents a day each, and that for the whole year they will average no more than five cents a day." — *Missionary Herald, August, 1881.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 28. Whenever a person can do any thing well, it brings him more of the same kind to do.
2. Ver. 30. Love of God with our whole nature is the central power of religion.
3. True love carries all the powers and energies with it.
4. Ver. 31. The fruit of love to God is love to our fellow-men, God's children.
5. Ver. 35. The Christian should not merely stand on the defensive, but should set the enemies of religion to answering the questions against themselves.
6. Vers. 36, 37. Many a mystery as viewed from earth becomes plain when viewed from heaven.
7. Vers. 38-40. Empty souls, and persons deficient in real worth, seek a reputation from outward show.
8. A love of human honors and flattering titles is unbecoming a follower of Jesus, and contrary to the spirit of his religion.
9. Vers. 41-44. God measures our gifts, not by their amount, but by the degree of self-sacrifice and love they express.
10. If the rich gave to the Lord in the same proportion as the poor, the Lord's treasury would never be empty.
11. It is a great blessing that the poor are not excluded from giving, but may lay up as much treasure in heaven as the more fortunate.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Several subjects are brought to our notice in this lesson, but all may be included in LOVE AND ITS FRUITS. (1) *Love the foundation of all morality and religion* (vers. 28-34). Showing the two fundamental commandments, and how these two fulfil the whole law. (2) *Love using wisdom* (vers. 35-37). In leading the scribes to see the truth of the scriptures. (3) *Love uttering warnings* (vers. 38-40). Against hypocrisy and ambition. Why it is love that warns. (4) *Love expressed in giving* (vers. 41-44). The measure of giving being the love and self-sacrifice, and not the amount given.

LESSON XI.—SEPTEMBER 10.

CALAMITIES FORETOLD.—MARK 13: 1-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.*—PROV. 22: 3.

TIME.—A. D. 30. Late Tuesday afternoon, April 4. After our Lord's final departure from the temple.

PLACE.—(1) Jerusalem; and (2) Mount of Olives.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus (John 12: 20-27). A voice from heaven (John 12: 28-36). Reflections on the unbelief of the Jews (John 12: 37-50).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 24: 1-22. Luke 21: 5-24.

INTRODUCTION.

After his commendation of the poor widow for giving her two mites, Jesus, still in the temple area, receives a visit from some Greeks; then a voice from heaven bears testimony to him; and, after some parting words, he leaves the temple never to enter it again. At this point our lesson to-day begins.

This lesson and the next are closely joined together; and they delineate three great events, all called the *coming of the Son of man*: (1) The end of the Jewish dispensation, and the full establishment of Christ's kingdom; the completion of its entrance into the world, as a ship launched upon the ocean. (2) The end of the age, or preparatory Christian dispensation, and the complete victory of the kingdom of Christ over the whole world, when his *kingdom has come, and his will is done on earth as it is in heaven*. (3) The end of the world. All are preceded by terrible events, and are so much alike that the same language can and does largely describe each of them.

1. And ¹as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*

2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? ²there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

And as he went forth out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings! And Jesus said unto him, ^aSeest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down.

¹ Matt. 24: 1. Luke 21: 5. ² Luke 19: 44.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Signs of Christ's coming. — Vers. 1-13. **1. As he went out of the temple;** i.e., the exclusively Jewish part enclosed from the Court of the Gentiles. He never returned, and henceforth the temple was virtually desolate. — *Schaff*. **What manner of stones . . . what buildings.** The great size of the blocks, and the massiveness and magnificence of the erections, the colonnades or porticos, gateways, and other structures, that were grouped around the inner sanctuary, riveted the disciple's attention, and evoked his admiration. No wonder. The Temple of Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the world. Josephus, in his *Antiquities* (xv. 11, 3), speaks of the stones of a certain part of the edifice, as being "each, in length, 25 cubits (37 to 44 feet); in height, 8 (12 to 14 feet); in breadth, about 12 (18 to 21 feet)." In his *Wars* (5: 5, 6), he speaks of "some of the stones as 45 cubits in length, 5 in height, and 6 in breadth." — *Morison*. Few buildings, in ancient or modern times, have equalled in magnificence Herod's Temple. With its outbuildings it covered an area of over 19 acres, was built of white marble, was 46 years in building (John 2: 20), and employed in its construction 10,000 skilled workmen. — *Abbott*. "It was as if they thought that the loveliness and splendor of the scene would intercede with him," to save it from the ruin he had foretold two days before, on his triumphal entry (Luke 19: 43, 44; Lesson V. of this quarter).

2. There shall not be left one stone upon another. At the time this was spoken no event was more improbable than this. The temple was vast, rich, splendid. It was the pride of the nation, and the nation was at peace. Yet in the short space of 40 years all this was exactly accomplished. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, A. D. 70. The account of the siege and destruction of the city is left us by Josephus. — *Barnes*. To Jesus the sole beauty of a temple was the sincerity of its worshippers; and no gold or marble, no delicate sculpturing or votive gems, could change for him a den of robbers into a house of prayer. — *Farrar*. **That shall not be thrown down.** The fortifications of Jerusalem and its natural advantages rendered it so apparently impregnable, that, after its fall, Titus, the captor, is reported by Josephus (*Wars of Jews*, 6: 9, 1) to have said, "It was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications." — *Abbott*. Titus ordered the whole city and the temple to be dug up, leaving only two or three of the chief towers, so that those who visited it could hardly believe that it had ever been inhabited (*Wars*, vii. 1). — *Plumptre*. Of the temple proper

3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately.

4. ¹Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5. And Jesus answering them began to say, ²Take heed lest any man deceive you:

6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And as he sat on the mount 3 of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished? And Jesus began 5 to say unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. Many shall come in my name, 6 saying, I am he; and shall

¹ Matt. 24 : 3. Luke 21 : 7. ² Jer. 29 : 8. Eph. 5 : 6. 1 Thess. 2 : 3.

not a vestige remains. It was built, however, upon an immense platform, partly composed of natural rock, partly of immense masonry. This platform is still standing. — *Abbott*. The remains which recent explorations have disinterred belong, all of them, to the sub-structure of the temple, — its drains, foundations, underground passages, and the like. — *Plumptre*.

3. **And as he sat.** The words fell on the ears of the disciples, and awed them into silence. It was not till they had crossed to the Mount of Olives that even the foremost and most favored ventured to break it. — *Plumptre*. **Upon the Mount of Olives.** The siege of Jerusalem began from this place. **Over against the temple.** On leaving the Temple Jesus would descend into the valley of the Kedron, and ascend the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives. Then full in view the temple would rise with its colonnades of dazzling white marble, surmounted with golden roof and pinnacles. — *Cambridge Bible*. At a distance the whole temple looked literally like a mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles. — *Milman*. **Peter, James, John, Andrew.** The four fishermen first called, and first named in all the lists, the confidential disciples. — *Schaff*. **Asked him privately.** Either apart from the multitude, but in the presence of the other disciples, or apart from the other disciples, in a private conference.

4. **When shall these things be?** The things of which they had heard him speak. The question is given more fully by St. Matthew (24 : 3). It embraced three points : (1) the time of the destruction of the temple ; (2) the sign of his coming [i.e., of his *public manifestation as the Messiah* : this they were momentarily expecting (Luke 19 : 11. Acts 1 : 6) (*Abbott*) ; and (3) of the end of the world. — *Maclear*. **What shall be the sign?** By what signs shall we know when these things shall be accomplished? They wanted some insight into his plans, so that they might know when and how he was to come, and all the events he had foretold should take place, and his kingdom be established. They were in Egyptian darkness as to the future, and were liable to misunderstand the events as they took place.

5. **Jesus answering.** He imparted only so much as was necessary to guard them against deception, to stimulate their watchfulness, and confirm their confidence that the end would come at last. Much, indeed, was at that time beyond their comprehension, and could only be made clear by the enlightening influence of the Spirit, and by the progress of events. — *Neander*. Our Lord does not answer the *when* but by admonitions not to be deceived. See a question similarly answered (Luke 13 : 23, 24). — *Alford*. **Began to say.** Began his first explanation, which probably took a wider range than they had expected. — *Schaff*. **Take heed.** This is the text of this discourse, and to it Christ constantly recurs. — *Abbott*. The four moral keynotes of the discourse on the last things are "*Beware*," "*Watch*," "*Endure*," "*Pray*," — *Farrar*. **Lest any man deceive you.** Lead you astray. Make you wander from the truth or from the path of duty. The divine wisdom of the Saviour, and his knowledge of the perils which beset his followers, are strikingly exemplified in this preliminary warning against error and delusion, this exposure of false signs before giving a description of the true. His purpose in this first part of his discourse is not to tell what are, but what are not, the premonitions of the great catastrophe to which he here refers. — *Alexander*.

6. **For.** Introducing the ground or reason of this unexpected warning. — *Alexander*. **Many shall come.** Five tokens are here given, to which the Lord directs the attention of his disciples : (1) the rise of false prophets ; (2) wars and rumors of wars ; (3) the rising of nation against nation ; (4) earthquakes ; (5) famines. — *Cambridge Bible*. **In my name.** Pretending to be the Messiah. As the destruction of their holy city drew near, and the Messianic hopes of the Jews were at fever-heat, many enthusiasts arose, and awakened false expectations, and drew large numbers after them (Acts 5 : 36, 37. 1 John 2 : 18). Josephus says that in the reign of Claudius (who died A. D. 54), the land was over-

7. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall* not be yet.

8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: ¹these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9. But ²take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

lead many astray. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled: *these things* must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise ⁸against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there shall be earthquakes in divers places; there shall be famines: these things are the beginning of travail.

But take ye heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before governors and kings shall ye stand for my sake, for a testimony unto

¹ Matt. 24 : 8. ² Rev. 2 : 10. Matt. 10 : 17, 18; 24 : 9.

run with magicians and impostors, who drew multitudes of the people into the deserts to see the signs and miracles which they promised. And now, as the end draws near, there are arising many men with their new religions and doctrines, pretending to be better than Christianity, and to be the real Messiahs of humanity; and they still deceive many. — *P.*

7. **Wars and rumors of wars.** The primary reference is to the threats of war against the Jews before the campaign which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. During this period there were unusual commotions among the Jews in all countries, and in Rome too. It is also a prediction of unexampled convulsions before the second coming of Christ. — *Schaff.* Satan will never give up his kingdom without a resistance that will bring wars and persecutions. The demon will tear the nations before he will go out at the word of Christ. **Be ye not troubled.** (1) As if every thing were going to ruin. These are part of the process of the coming, as the destruction of Jerusalem was essential to the full coming of the new kingdom. (2) Be not troubled; for *you* will be safe, both at the judgment and at the destruction of Jerusalem. Every Christian escaped from that destruction. (3) These things do not prove that the great catastrophe and final consummation is at hand. **The end not yet.** Neither the destruction of Jerusalem, nor the end of the world. These are not the certain signs of the end, for they occur at other times as well as then.

8. **Nation shall rise against nation.** Bear in mind the massacres at Cesarea, between Syrians and Jews, in which 20,000 of the latter fell, while in Syria almost every city was divided into two armies, which stood opposed to one another as deadly enemies; the quick succession of the five emperors in Rome within a few years, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and the tumults connected therewith in wider and narrower circles. — *Van Oosterzee.* The war-fiend ran riot in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. — *Thomas.* Even if there is a wider reference, the primary application to such events as the destruction of Jerusalem is undeniable. — *Riddle.* **Earthquakes.** Between this prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem there were, (1) a great earthquake at Crete, A. D. 46 or 47; (2) one at Rome, A. D. 51; (3) one at Apamia in Phrygia, A. D. 53; (4) one at Laodicea in Phrygia, A. D. 60; (5) one in Campania; (6) one in Jerusalem, A. D. 67, described in Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, 4. 4, 5). The frequency and destructiveness of the earthquakes of this period have been remarked upon by Seneca. — *Kendrick.* Pompeii was partly destroyed by an earthquake, A. D. 63; and, with Herculaneum, wholly overthrown in August, A. D. 79. **Famines.** A great famine, prophesied in Acts (11 : 28), occurred A. D. 49, and another in the reign of Claudius, and mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq.* 3 : 15, 3). A pestilence, A. D. 65, in a single autumn carried off 30,000 persons at Rome. **Troubles.** That is, *disturbances*, or social perplexities and tumults, — such as are the natural result of wide-spread want. Men who are pinched with hunger are apt, unless of noble character, to become desperate and reckless. — *Morison.* **Beginnings of sorrows;** of travail. Of that labor-pain of the world, out of which the kingdom of God is to be born. A figure full of the brightness of hope. The world's anguish is itself a prophecy of the future birth of the kingdom of righteousness. I understand Christ's language here to be an admonition to expect a long period of conflict and trial before the end will appear, a prophecy which history has both interpreted and fulfilled. — *Abbott.* The death-throes of the Jewish state precede the "regeneration" of the universal Christian Church, as the death-throes of this world, the new heavens and the new earth. — *Alford.*

9. **Take heed to yourselves.** Not as a means of escaping from persecution, but as a means of preparing for it, as Christ bade Peter take heed against temptation (Matt. 26 : 41). — *Abbott.* **For.** "Before all these things" (Luke 21 : 12); i.e., before these public calamities

10. And ¹the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11. ²But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but ³the Holy Ghost.

12. Now ⁴the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13. ⁵And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he ⁶that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

them. And the gospel must ¹⁰first be preached unto all the nations. And when they lead ¹¹you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. And brother ¹²shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ¹³ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

¹ Matt. 24: 14. ² Matt. 10: 19. Luke 12: 11; 21: 14. ³ Acts 2: 4; 4: 8, 31. ⁴ Mic. 7: 6. Matt. 10: 21; 24: 10. Luke 21: 16. ⁵ Matt. 24: 9. Luke 21: 17. ⁶ Dan. 12: 12. Matt. 10: 22; 24: 13. Rev. 2: 10.

ties come, they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten. These refer to *ecclesiastical* proceedings against them. And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings. Before *civil* tribunals next. For my sake, for a testimony against them. Rather, "unto them;" to give you an opportunity of bearing testimony to me before them. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the best commentary on this announcement. (Cf. Matt. 10: 17, 18.)—*J. F. and B.* The martyrdoms and persecutions have ever called attention to the religion of Christ, and opened ways for its promulgation.

10. The gospel must first be published. Preached, proclaimed, which is the proper conception of preaching.—*Schaff.* Among all nations. The gospel had been published through the Roman world as then known, and every nation had received its testimony before the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Col. 1: 6, 23. 2 Tim. 4: 17.) But further, the gospel has yet to be preached universally for a testimony. And the universal diffusion of it by modern Christian missions is now a leading sign of the end.—*Jacobus.*

11. When they shall lead you (to judgment); i.e., in fetters; or, at all events, as persons under arrest.—*Morison.* Take no thought beforehand. ("Be not anxious," as in the New Version.) The idea is: You need not distress yourselves by anxiously considering beforehand how you ought to speak before such high and august personages.—*Morison.* Let all your thoughts beforehand be concerned about the publishing. Let your words and thoughts be aggressive: I will take care for the defence. Delivered from care of the future, be occupied with present duty.—*Cambridge Bible.* This verse is best interpreted by such practical illustrations as are afforded by Acts 4: 19, 20; 5: 20-32; and especially Dan. 3: 16-18. The words indicate an almost tender sympathy with the feelings of Galilean disciples, "unlearned and ignorant men," standing before those who were counted so much their superiors in power and knowledge.—*Plumptre.* Whatsoever shall be given you . . . speak ye. Not only *what* they should say, but *how*; in what form and phrase to say it, should be given in that hour.—*Plumptre.* Not ye, . . . the Holy Ghost. The promise is from our Lord himself; but in this passage the power is attributed to "the Holy Ghost;" and in Matt. 10: 20, "to the spirit of your Father." This hints not obscurely at the fact of the Trinity.—*Riddle.* Observe that this direction affords no countenance whatever to preaching the truth without previous preparation. It is simply a warning against allowing the mind to be divided in time of danger between the desire of personal safety and the desire to be faithful to the truth. His direction is here enforced by promises which Luke alone records (Luke 21: 15, 18).—*Abbott.* God gave them power; and they spake with a wisdom, fearlessness, pungency, and ability, which no other men have ever manifested—full proof that these illiterate fishermen were under the influence of the Holy Ghost.—*Barnes.* Many besides the apostles have had experience of this high assistance, and have been themselves amazed at the aptness of the ideas and words that were flashed, as occasion required, into their minds.—*Morison.*

12. Brother . . . betray the brother, . . . father the son. As there is nothing that excites such love as the gospel when intelligently received, so there is nothing that occasions such hate as this same gospel when passionately rejected. In that reception or rejection the heart of the heart is concerned.—*Morison.* In missionary lands this is literally fulfilled to-day, as we all know.

13. Hated of all men. The Roman historian Tacitus speaks of the early Christians

14. ¶ ¹ But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, ² spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand), then ³ let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains :

But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judea

¹ Matt. 24 : 15. ² Dan. 9 : 27. ³ Luke 21 : 21.

as a hated race. It is difficult for us in these days to understand how literally this was fulfilled. The most shameful practices were attributed to Christians; and partly in consequence of these falsehoods, partly from hatred of good, they were treated as the offscouring of the earth. Perhaps something like this may occur again. But this need not discourage. While thus hated, Christians won their greatest victories. Now, as then, the world often hates most what it is forced to respect and even to admire. — *Riddle*. For my name's sake. Because of your love and service to me. Good men are continually hated because they are Christ's, and are advocating his laws and truths against the practices of bad men. **Endure unto the end.** The endurance here spoken of is the *brave and persistent endurance* of the Christian in faith and love. In this noble word "patience," the "queen of virtues," as Chrysostom does not fear to call it, there always appears in the New Testament a background of *manliness*. — *Ellicott*. **Unto the end, . . . shall be saved.** "He that endureth till the end shall be saved," must mean, (1) that those Jewish Christians, who, despite all seductions and persecutions, should abide steadfast, should be delivered from the national calamities; (2) that those who should endure the greater tribulations of the last days "unto the end" should "escape all those things that shall come to pass" (see Luke 21 : 36); while it may be universally applied to mean (3) that every one, in every age, who should endure to *his own* "end," i.e., death, should be saved. — *Stock*.

II. **Immediate Tokens of the Downfall of Jerusalem.** — Vers. 14-20. The prominent reference in these verses is to the destruction of Jerusalem. Another fulfilment is probable. But precisely because the details are so minute, we must be cautious in applying it to the final catastrophe. — *Schaff*.

14. **When ye shall see.** He now gives them tokens which should forewarn them of the approaching destruction, and tells them how they may secure their own safety. — *Maclear*. **The abomination of desolation;** i.e., the abomination that makes desolate, "the act of sacrilege which is a sign and a cause of desolation." — *Cambridge Bible*. The Roman army is here called an abomination (Luke 21 : 20) because upon its standards were depicted the images of their emperor and the tutelary gods whom they worshipped; and idols were held by the Jews in the utmost abhorrence, and called by the very name here used, "an abomination." The word "desolation" is added because this mighty army brought ruin and desolation on Jerusalem. — *Porteus*. **Daniel the prophet.** These words should be omitted here, as in the New Version, though they are rightly retained in Matthew. The words are thrice used in Daniel, 9 : 27; 11 : 31; 12 : 11. **Standing where it ought not.** Matthew, "In the holy place," — either the temple, or Jerusalem, the holy city. This city, and the mountain on which it stood, and a circuit of several furlongs around it, were accounted holy ground. — *Porteus*. **Let him that readeth.** This is generally regarded as an admonition of the Evangelist, added to emphasize Christ's warning. — *Abbott*. **Understand.** Let him know that this is the fulfilment. **Them (the disciples) that be in Judea . . . flee to the mountains,** or highlands of the interior. The full force of this exhortation cannot be perceived except by viewing it in contrast with the former part of the discourse, in which he accumulates what seem to be sufficient causes of alarm and flight, but only to forbid them. Though thousands should appear professing to be Christ; though every nation in the world should be involved in war; though all the ties of nature should be broken; and though men should hate me so as to persecute you purely on my account, — no matter, remain quiet : "in your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21 : 19). These are fearful evils, and will lead to dreadful sufferings; but they are not signs of my appearing. But when you see a heathen host triumphant upon sacred ground, then flee from Judea, for a great catastrophe is then at hand. — *Alexander*. There was abundant time, after the first approach of the Roman armies, for the Christians to flee. Her desolation did not then begin, but was at hand. — *Schaff*. Full two years before the final investment of the city, Cestius Gallus marched a Roman army upon the city, and commenced its siege. If he had continued a little longer, he would have taken it; but he suddenly removed his army without apparent reason, thus giving the Christians a chance to escape. — *P*. The Christians, warned by the sign, and, according to the Church historian Eusebius, also by a direct divine intimation, obeyed the Lord's injunction, and fled to Pella, one of the cities of Decapolis, which continued for fifty years to be the seat of the "Church of Jerusalem." And the tra-

15. And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house :

16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again to take up his garment.

17. ¹ But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days !

18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19. ² For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved : but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

flee unto the mountains: and ¹⁵ let him that is on the house-top not go down, nor enter in, to take any thing out of his house: and let him that ¹⁶ is in the field not return back to take his cloak. But woe ¹⁷ unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye ¹⁸ that it be not in the winter. For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be. And except ²⁰ the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

¹ Luke 21 : 23 ; 23 : 29. ² Dan. 9 : 26 ; 12 : 1. Joel 2 : 2. Matt. 24 : 21.

dition has always been accepted, that not one of the despised "sect of the Nazarenes" perished in the siege. — *Stock*.

15. Him that is on the housetop. The flat roofs of Eastern dwellings were a favorite place of resort. — *Schaff*. It is said that one may run from one part of Jerusalem to another, and even to the city gates, along these flat roofs of the houses. — *Abbott*. **Not go down into the house.** The stairway is often outside the house, but within the court. The urgency of the flight recommended by our Lord is enhanced by the fact that the stairs do lead down into the court or *lewan*. He in effect says, "Though you must pass by the very door of your room, do not enter; escape for your life." — *Thomson*.

16. Not turn back . . . take up his garment, or cloak. This was an outer garment, but the almost necessary accompaniment of every Jewish traveller. It was thrown off or left at home during work, but was used at night as a wrapper, and would seem to the disciples almost indispensable in such flight. But they were not to turn back, even for so important an article. The exigency would be too urgent, the peril too great. — *Abbott*.

17. Woe (will be) to them . . . with child. In consequence of the aggravated suffering which those conditions would involve. — *J. F. and B.* — The Saviour's heart was more tender than a woman's, and bled when he thought of the anguish that would, in many cases, be inevitable in the hasty flight.

18. Your flight be not in the winter. Making escape perilous, or tempting you to delay your flight. Matthew (24 : 20) adds, "neither on the sabbath day," when, from fear of a breach of its sacred rest, they might be induced to remain. We may well believe that the Christians made both these petitions theirs, and their prayers were answered. (a) The compassing of the city by the Roman armies spoken of by St. Luke (21 : 20) took place at the commencement of October, A. D. 66, when the weather was yet mild and favorable for travelling. (b) The final siege, if any Christian Jews lingered on till then, took place in the still more open months of April or May. — *Cambridge Bible*.

19. In those days shall be affliction, etc. Josephus declares that "the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so terrible as theirs were," "nor did any age ever produce a generation more fruitful of wickedness from the beginning of the world." The horrors of war and sedition, of famine and pestilence, were such as exceeded all example or conception. The city was densely crowded by the multitudes which had come up to the passover. Pestilence ensued, and famine followed. The commonest instincts of humanity were forgotten. Acts of violence and cruelty were perpetrated without compunction or remorse, and barbarities enacted which cannot be described. Mothers snatched the food from the mouths of their husbands and children, and one actually killed, roasted, and devoured her infant son. (Compare Lev. 26 : 29. Deut. 28 : 56, 57.) The besieged devoured even the filth of the streets; and so excessive was the stench, that it was necessary to hurl 600,000 corpses over the wall, while 97,000 captives were taken during the war, and more than 1,100,000 perished in the siege. — *Cambridge Bible*. Five hundred every day were, by the command of Titus, crucified on the walls around the city. The multitude of executions was so great that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies. — *Thomas*.

20. Had shortened those days; i.e., the days of the siege of the Roman army. Had the horrors within and without which accompanied the siege of Jerusalem been prolonged,

the utter desolation of the country would have been the result. But in mercy they were shortened, (1) by the swift and energetic measures of the invading armies, and (2) by the infatuation of the besieged. On his part Titus encircled the city with a wall five miles in extent, and fortified it with thirteen strong garrisons in the almost incredibly short space of three days, and Josephus makes special mention of his eagerness to bring the siege to an end. On the other hand, the leaders of the factions within slew the men who would have taught them how the siege might be prolonged, burnt the corn which would have enabled them to hold out against the enemy, and abandoned the towers, which were in reality impregnable. Thus the city, which in the time of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1-6. Jer. 39:1, 2) had resisted the forces of Nebuchadnezzar for sixteen months, was taken by the Romans in less than five. — *Cambridge Bible*. The strong language of the verse, and the prophecy of Daniel (chap. 12:1), which is here alluded to, point to a providential interposition in the great days of tribulation which are to come in the *last times*. The shortening of the days will be the hastening of the Lord's coming. — *Schaff*. No flesh should be saved. *No flesh*, that is, none of the Jews. There would have been an almost total extermination of the race, so exasperated were the Romans, and so fitted were they by their victories to carry this exasperation into fatal effect. — *Morison*. The elect's (chosen) sake. The motive that moved the will of "the Lord" is revealed. He has a special regard to the elect "in Christ;" and hence, that they might not be extirpated, he overrulingly curtailed the days of tribulation. *The elect in Christ*, or, in other words, *the true Christians*, were, for all the great moral ends which were contemplated by the Divine Grace, the flower of the population; and, so far as human agency was concerned, they were the hope of the world. — *Morison*. This is not only an illustration of the power of prayer, but of the indirect gain to the world of the presence in it of the Church as a conserving element. — *Bengel*.

All these things came upon the Jews because they rejected Christ. Had they received him as the Messiah, they would not have aroused the opposition of the Roman Empire as they did. They would have been united, and able to defy all attacks; and God would have preserved them. Those who did escape did so by an obedient faith, believing these warnings of Christ, taking note of the sign he gave them, and fleeing from the city.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Smith's *New Testament History*, chap. 5, pp. 97-138. Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel*, pp. 463-476. Charles Timmins's *Testimony of Jesus*. On the destruction of Jerusalem, see Josephus' *Wars*, 6:9, 3; Tacitus' *History*, v.:13; Milman's *History of the Jews*, ii. 16; Merivale's *Roman History*, vi. 59; *Helena's Household*, a story of those times; Charlotte Elizabeth's *Judea Capta*; Lecky's *History of European Morals*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. When we would build houses and plant gardens in a new country, we have always first to disturb the quiet of the old state of things. The trees are cut down, the ground is upturned, great quantities of material are piled around in seeming confusion. Only thus can we gain our beautiful home. So there are always confusions, overturnings, and commotions in the planting of Christ's kingdom, and in every new and great impulse of its progress. — *P*.

II. The Church is like the burning bush which Moses saw, all aflame, but unconsumed. It is like the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, all unharmed because the Son of God was with them. Like Venus, it was born from the foam of an ocean of opposition; like Hercules, it had to strangle the serpents which assailed it even in its cradle. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 1, 2. No outward glory or prosperity can save a church or a people.
2. Ver. 4. Christ does not satisfy all our curiosity, but he gives us all the truth we need for our daily living.
3. Vers. 7-9. We must not be disappointed because good causes are surrounded with difficulties and troubles, and good men sometimes perish.
4. Men are so bad that only by great wars, troubles, and upheavals, can evil be destroyed, and Christ reign on the earth.
5. But all persecutions and martyrdoms are the means of proclaiming the truth.
6. The gospel is to be preached to all nations.
7. Those who reject Christ will certainly be destroyed, and their end is terrible.
8. God opens a way of escape for all who believe on his name.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING CHRIST, — *utter destruction, while those who believe in Christ shall be saved*, — all this is foretold in this lesson, and illustrated by the history of the fall of Jerusalem. (1) *The beautiful city and temple*, vers. 1, 2. No outward wealth or prosperity can save the wicked. Set forth the scene as it appeared from the Mount of Olives. (2) *The three questions* (vers. 3, 4), recorded more fully in Matthew (24:3). (3) *The sorrows and destruction of the wicked*, vers. 5-8, 14-20. After explaining the difficult places in the verses, and showing why the old must be destroyed before the new dispensation could be established, describe the terrors of the destruction of Jerusalem; show the reason why, in the rejection of Christ. All this a type of the end of all sinners. (4) *The sorrows and salvation of those who believe*, vers. 9-14. The good suffer, but not as do the wicked. But all true disciples shall be saved, as all Christians, by *believing Christ's word*, escaped the destruction of Jerusalem.

LESSON 12. — SEPTEMBER 17.

WATCHFULNESS ENJOINED. — MARK 13:21-37.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.* — 1 THESS. 5:6.

TIME. — Late Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A. D. 30.

PLACE. — The Mount of Olives. After the final departure of Jesus from the temple.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 24:23-42. Luke 21:25-36.

INTRODUCTION.

This lesson is a part of the same prophecy as the last lesson, foretelling so much of the future as was necessary for the comfort and courage and watchfulness of the disciples then and for all time.

21. ¹ And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not:

22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

And then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ; or, Lo, there; believe *it* not; for there shall arise ²² false Christs and false prophets, and shall show signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect.

¹ Matt. 24:23. Luke 17:23; 21:8.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **Danger from Pretended Messiahs.** — Vers. 21-23. Christ's warning here implies that the disciples would be expecting the coming of Christ in his kingdom immediately after the tribulations spoken of in the last lesson.

21. **Then.** During, or after, the troublous times just described. **Shall say, Lo here is (the) Christ.** The Messiah, who would deliver the Jews, as a great conqueror of the world, and who would bring the promised kingdom of God. **Believe him not.** For there is to be no such visible, outward kingdom of God as these pretend to bring, and as many expect. The Messiah and the kingdom are coming, but without observation, and in a way you cannot now understand.

22. **False Christs.** Pretenders taking the title and claiming the authority of the Messiah, the king and deliverer of the Jews, foretold in prophecy. **False prophets.** Persons falsely assuming to be religious teachers sent from God, and to have a divine message. Josephus tells us that false prophets and impostors prevailed on multitudes to follow them into the desert, promising there to display signs and wonders (compare Acts 21:38): and even at the last, when the temple was in flames, numbers of all ages flocked thither from the city upon the proclamation of a false prophet; and of 6,000 assembled there on this occasion, not one escaped the fire or the sword. — *Cambridge Bible.* While this may refer to the impostors of the first century, it now points to anti-Christ, or the many anti-Christ's (1 John 2:18) constantly arising. — *Schaff.* It refers also to all

23. But ¹take ye heed : behold, I have foretold you | all things.

But take ye heed: behold, ²³I have told you all things beforehand.

¹ 2 Pet. 3 : 17.

those rationalistic systems of thought, infidel schemes, sciences falsely so called, spiritualistic doctrines, which are trying to supplant the religion of Christ, and pretend to be the true religion that will save humanity, and which multiply under the increasing light of the gospel, as weeds grow fastest under the summer sun which produces the most fruitful harvest. — *P.* **Show signs and wonders.** Josephus tells us that the false Christs and prophets appeared as magicians, promising to work miracles. — *Abbott.* The reality of their miracles is not asserted, nor implied. The signs might seem to be supernatural, and not be so. They would be known to be false by a consideration of their *purpose*, without any explanation of their *nature*. — *Godwin.* Such imposture is to be still more signally realized with “*signs and lying wonders*,” before the final coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2 : 1-10). — *Maclear.* To seduce (lead astray) if it were possible. So perfect will be the imposture. But it will not be possible (John 6 : 39 ; 10 : 28. Rom. 8 : 38, 39. 2 Tim. 2 : 19. 1 John 5 : 18). — *Abbott.* **Elect** ; i.e., Christians. In the midst of the spiritual freedom that is the spiritual birthright of all truly spiritual persons, there is no fear of universal delusion. A seed to do God's service will never fail. The holy bush that burns will never be consumed, whatever may become of withered branches and some sickly sprays. — *Morison.*

23. But take ye heed. The word “ye” is emphatic : but as for you, who have been forewarned, take heed ; watch all indications of the fulfilment. — *Schaff.* Behold. Mark ! take note ! remember ! Foretold. Do not think an unforeseen and unprovided-for thing has happened. Regard what happens as evidence of my truth ; and, being a fulfilment of my words, as proof that I am the Christ. — *Biblical Museum.* So that you need not be deceived, since you have known the life and character of the true Messiah.

II. The Second Advent of the Lord. — Vers. 24-31. That view of the second advent taught here, and in many other places, which is the simplest, and which best comprehends all the teachings in regard to it, is that the second advent is three-fold, and yet really but one. It is like a great mountain-range, which is really but one mountain system, and, when described as seen from a distant point, may be described as one mountain ; and yet, on a nearer view, is seen to consist of three ranges rising one above the other, with long spaces between. It may also be compared to “receiving an education,” which is completed at the graduation from the professional school. It is one education ; but there is a completion, a graduation, also at the high school and at the college, and the same description will largely apply to each of its parts as to the education as a whole.

I. There was a *second advent which culminated at the destruction of Jerusalem*, when Christ's kingdom had really been established on the earth in the place of the old dispensation ; the removal of the holy city and the temple and its sacrifices made for the acceptance of the true kingdom and sacrifice of Christ : the accuracy of the prophecy recorded in this chapter in its application to this event, the repeated declaration that this coming should take place *in this generation* (ver. 30), and while some of the disciples who heard Christ should be still living (Mark 9 : 1), proves that this must be what is referred to. (1) It was a *second coming*, a return after his departure. (2) It was *personal* : he promised to abide with the Church. (3) It was preceded by great judgments. (4) The gospel was first preached to all nations.

II. *There will be a second advent when the gospel has triumphed over all the earth, and the millennium is ushered in, and the believers scattered through many nations, and organizations shall become one visible kingdom.* This is the full coming of the kingdom prophesied in Daniel and the Old Testament ; this is the coming the later apostles were expecting ; this is what John means when he prayed, “Lord Jesus, come quickly.” It was not the judgment and the destruction of the world, but the *conversion of the world*, they longed for, and for which we long and pray. (1) This is *personal*, for Christ will reign in every heart. (2) It will be preceded by the fall of all the powers of evil, all tyrannies, and hierarchies, and slaveries, and idolatries, and systems of false religion. The governments of the earth, as now founded, must perish, and be changed into governments for the good of the people. These stars shall fall, and powers be shaken. (3) It will be a coming in the clouds with power and glory ; for the source of all these triumphs of Christ is from heaven, and no kingdom is so glorious or so powerful as this.

III. *There will be a coming of Christ, in visible bodily presence, at the time of the judgment and resurrection*, as in 1 Thess. 4 : 13-18. Rev. 20 : 7-22 : 5, and Matt. 25. These comings were not always clearly distinguished, because they are really one great whole. — *P.*

24. ¶ ¹ But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26. ² And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

But in those days, after that 24 tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the 25 stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they 26 see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall 27 he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

¹ Dan. 7:10. Zeph. 1:15. Matt. 24:29, etc. Luke 21:25. ² Dan. 7:13, 14. Matt. 16:27; 24:30. Mark 14:62. Acts 1:11. 1 Thess. 4:16. 2 Thess. 1:7, 10. Rev. 1:7.

24. In those days. In those future days. After that tribulation. Of which he had been speaking in vers. 14-20; that is, after the tribulation connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish state and dispensation.—*Morison*. And that precedes the coming of Christ in his fulfilled kingdom. The sun shall be darkened. This is thought by some to be merely a figurative, poetical representation of great civil and social commotions, like those depicted in Isa. 13:10; 24:23; 34:4. Ezek. 32:7, 8. Joel 2:10; 3:15. Amos 8:9. Mic. 3:6-8. Others understand the language as describing real visible phenomena of the heavens (the stars falling meaning meteors; and 'the powers that are in heaven,' the greater heavenly bodies that affect the earth,—the solar system.—*Schaff*), at the personal and final coming of Christ, when the earth is to be renovated, and the entire solar system changed into a heavenly constitution. (Heb. 1:10-12. 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12. Rev. 20:11; 21:23.)—*Binney*. Others take it literally, but make it typical of spiritual events to occur at the same time. The sun of this world and the Church is the Lord Jesus; the light is the knowledge of him. The darkening of the sun is the obscuring of the knowledge of him. The moon shall not give her light; i.e., the reflected light of science, which derives its excellence only from Christ the true sun, shall cease to guide.

25. The stars of heaven shall fall. The leaders and teachers shall be cast down or become apostate. The powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. The influences which rule human society shall be disturbed. So *Alford*. This was true at the destruction of Jerusalem, and will be true again before the complete conversion of the world. (See above, under II.) So long as the prophecy is unfulfilled, the exact meaning cannot be insisted upon.—*Schaff*.

26. They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds. Doubtless at last a literal coming thus, as foretold in Acts 1:9-11. But at the destruction of Jerusalem his coming was in the clouds, as expressing that the sources of the kingdom, and the powers that guided and gave it success, were from heaven and not from the earth,—that it was a spiritual kingdom, and not a temporal kingdom. So it will be when the whole world is converted to Christ, and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:24). Christ went to heaven in a cloud, and will in like manner come again (Acts 1:9, 11). Christ went before Israel in a cloud, which had a bright side and a dark side: so will the cloud have in which Christ will come at the great day; it will bring forth comfort and terror.—*Henry*. Christ is behind this heavenly framework: earth and sky are but a veil between him and us; the day will come when he will rend that veil, and show himself to us. And then according as we have waited for him will he recompense us.—*J. H. Newman*. Great power and glory. True of each part of his coming,—doubly true of the great last coming. Nothing can be more glorious than the triumph of Christianity over all the powers and nations of the earth.

27. Then shall he send his angels. "With a great sound of a trumpet" (Matt. 24:31). And shall gather together his elect, etc. As the tribes of Israel were anciently gathered together by sound of trumpet (Exod. 19:13, 16, 19. Lev. 23:24. Ps. 81:3-5), so any mighty gathering of God's people, by divine command, is represented as collected by sound of trumpet (Isa. 27:13. Cf. Rev. 11:15); and the ministry of angels, employed in all the great operations of Providence, is here held forth as the agency by which the present assembling of the elect is to be accomplished.—*J. F. and B.* In this verse the angels (messengers) may be understood figuratively as the preachers of the gospel gathering in Christ's elect into his Church on earth, as the angels of heaven will hereafter gather them into his heavenly kingdom.—*Cook*. Gather together the elect. The individual

28. ¹ Now learn a parable of the fig tree : When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near :

29. So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31. Heaven and earth shall pass away : but ² my words shall not pass away.

32. ¶ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Now from the fig tree learn ²⁸ her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; ²⁹ even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors. Verily I say unto ³⁰ you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished. Hea- ³¹ ven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day or that ³² hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

¹ Matt. 24: 32. Luke 21: 29, etc. ² Isa. 40: 8.

believers, over against the organizations which contain or conceal them. A gathering, either of living and raised believers into one place, or of the saints hitherto scattered among the nations into one organization. It is implied that before that time no one organization will include all believers. — *Schaff*. **The four winds.** Used to denote the quarters of the earth's surface; i.e., from all parts of the earth. **The uttermost part . . . uttermost part of heaven.** Probably an allusion to the apparent junction of earth and sky at the visible horizon, but in any case it refers to the whole world. — *Schaff*.

28. **A parable of the fig tree.** Now from the fig-tree learn her parable, or the high lesson which this fig-tree teaches. **Summer is near.** The sprouting leaf is a *sign* of coming summer. Strange if you saw *that* sign, and no summer followed. — *Biblical Museum*.

29. **So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass.** Rather, "coming to pass." **Know that it.** He, Christ and his kingdom (Luke 21: 31). **Is nigh, even at the doors.** That is, the full manifestation of it; for till then it admitted of no full development. In Luke (21: 28) the following words precede these: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Their redemption, in the first instance certainly, from Jewish oppression (1 Thess. 2: 14-16. Luke 11: 52), but in the highest sense of these words, redemption from all the oppressions and miseries of the present state at the second appearing of the Lord Jesus. — *J. F. and B.*

30. **This generation shall not pass (away) till all these things be done.** Accomplished. There are two explanations: (1) Generation is taken in its ordinary sense of the persons then living. That the word here has this meaning, is plain from the previous statement of Christ (Mark 9: 1), "There be some here which shall in no wise taste death till they see the kingdom of God come with power." And the prophecy had one exact fulfilment within that generation. (2) The word translated *generation* has sometimes the meaning of *race* or *nation*; having, it is true, a more pregnant meaning, implying that the character of one *generation* stamps itself upon *the race*, as here in this verse also. — *Alford*. That is, here the prophecy is not merely that the Jewish nation, *as a nation*, should not pass away, but also that it *should not lose its national characteristics*; amid all the changes of time it should remain unchanged; and this prophecy has been wonderfully fulfilled in the unparalleled history of the Jews. — *Abbott*. And the Jews as a race will remain till Christ's kingdom has come in all the earth.

31. **Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.** The strongest possible expression of the divine authority by which he spake: not as Moses or Paul might have said of their own inspiration, for such language would be unsuitable in any merely human mouth. — *J. F. and B.* (See Illustrative.) Never did the speaker seem to stand more utterly alone than when he uttered this majestic utterance. Never did it seem more improbable that it should be fulfilled. But as we look across the centuries we see how it has been realized. His words have passed into laws, they have passed into doctrines, they have passed into proverbs, they have passed into consolations; but they have never "passed away." What human teacher ever dared to claim an eternity for his words? — *Maclear*.

III. **Exhortation to Watchfulness.** — Vers. 32-37. 32. **Of that day and that hour.** Of Christ's coming. **Knoweth no man.** "The signs of the times" are left to us; the times themselves are in the hands of God. — *Ford*. **Not the angels, . . . neither the Son.** I understand Christ literally, as do Calvin, Meyer, Stier, Alford, and Alexander.

33. ¹ Take ye heed, watch, and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34. ² *For the Son of man* is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35. ³ Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning:

Take ye heed, watch and 33 pray: for ye know not when the time is. *It is as when* a 34 man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for 35 ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morn-

¹ Matt. 24: 42; 25: 13. Luke 12: 40; 21: 34. Rom. 13: 11. 1 Thess. 5: 6. ² Matt. 24: 45; 25: 14. ³ Matt. 24: 42, 44.

He did not know, in the same sense in which men and angels do not know. In his voluntary humiliation in taking upon him the form of a servant (Phil. 2: 6-8), he laid aside, not only external glory, but also knowledge and power (Matt. 20: 23. Mark 10: 40). The declaration of ignorance here is no more inexplicable than the declaration that he grew in wisdom (Luke 2: 52), learned obedience (Heb. 5: 8), marvelled (Matt. 8: 10), was tempted (Matt. 4: 1-11), uttered desires in prayer (Luke 6: 12, etc.). Any theory of Christ which denies or interprets away these and similar significant declarations of the limitations of his nature, is unscriptural. It were better frankly to concede, that, in the mystery of his being, the full interpretation of them is hidden from us, than to make them clear by denying their force and meaning. The practical lesson of the verse is well put by Dr. Schaff: "His voluntarily not knowing the day of judgment, during the days of his flesh, is a warning against chronological curiosity and mathematical calculations in the exposition of Scripture prophecy. It is not likely that any theologian, however learned, should know more or ought to know more on this point than Christ himself, who will judge the quick and the dead, chose to know in the state of his humiliation."—*Abbott*. What the disciples did learn was the signal of the approaching overthrow of Jerusalem, by which their own actions were to be determined.—*Cook*.

33. **Watch and pray.** To watch, denotes (1) to be sleepless; (2) to be vigilant.—*Maclear*. In view of the suddenness and unexpectedness of this coming, "watch and pray;" not be always expecting what will come unexpectedly, nor be seeking to know what cannot be known, but be always in a state of readiness, because of the uncertainty.—*Schaff*. *Watch, . . . pray.* The two great duties which in prospect of trial are constantly enjoined. These warnings, suggested by the need of preparedness for the tremendous calamities approaching, and the total wreck of the existing state of things, are the *general improvement* of the whole discourse.—*Brown*. **For ye know not the time.** It is well, therefore, to be always "looking for," and "longing for," or "hasting to," the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. 3: 12); for, so far as the individual interests of individual souls are concerned, it is certain that a great change will soon, and perhaps suddenly, occur; and it matters little, so far as these same individual interests are concerned, whether Christ come to us, or we go to Christ.—*Morison*.

34. **For the Son of man.** Better, *It is as when a man*. The whole matter of watching is as in the following parable. **Taking a far journey.** Sojourning in another country. **Gave authority;** i.e., the delegated power to conduct his household, and to manage his affairs while absent.—*Alexander*. **To every man his work.** The authority being joined with duty.—*Schaff*. Even so our Lord left his Church, gave authority to his servants the apostles, and to those who should come after them, and to every man his work, and is now waiting for the consummation of all things.—*Maclear*. **Commanded the porter (or door-keeper) to watch.** After he had given all the orders concerning the internal affairs, he gives finally, at the door, to the porter, the additional command to watch: this is the point of the parable. Contemplating them with reference to the Church this side of eternity, the porters are, of course, the apostles [and ministers] of Christ, together with the body of Christians.—*Lange*. He should both keep awake, and guard the house, as well as be in readiness to re-admit his Master, should he unexpectedly return.—*Alexander*.

35. **Watch.** He watches for Christ who has a sensitive, eager, apprehensive mind; who is awake, alive, quick-sighted, zealous in seeking and honoring him; who looks out for him in all that happens; and who would not be surprised, who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed, if he found that he was coming at once.—*Henry*. "It is the fundamental law of watchfulness, to be always watching." **Ye know not when the master of the house cometh.** But with all the obscurity thus intentionally thrown around the day and the hour of Christ's coming, let us not forget that no obscurity, no uncertainty, hangs around

36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

ing; lest coming suddenly he 36
find you sleeping. And what 37
I say unto you I say unto all,
Watch.

the great event itself. In all that future which lies before us, these are the only two events of which we are absolutely certain: our own approaching death, our Lord's approaching advent. — *Hanna*. At even, . . . morning. The four regular watches, from eventide to daybreak, representing, either periods in the world's history, or epochs in human life. — *Cook*. In the temple the priest, whose duty it was to superintend the night sentinels of the Levitical guard, might at any moment knock at the door and demand entrance. He came suddenly and unexpectedly, no one knew when. — *Maclear*.

36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. During the night the captain of the temple made his rounds. On his approach the guards had to rise, and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire, — a punishment, as we know, actually awarded. — *Edersheim*.

37. What I say unto you I say unto all. Though the apostles and the ministry are watchmen and porters, yet all believers are to be incessantly watchful, and for the same reasons. — *Schaff*. Watch. Observe in this chapter the emphasis given to Christ's exhortation, "Watch!" St. Matthew tells us how the Lord sought to impress these lessons of watchfulness and faithfulness still more deeply by the parables of the "Ten Virgins" (Matt. 25: 1-13), and the "Talents" (Matt. 25: 14-30), and closed all with a picture of the awful day when the Son of man should separate all nations one from another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt. 25: 31-46). So ended the great discourse on the Mount of Olives; and the sun set, and the Wednesday of Holy Week had already begun before the little company entered the hamlet of Bethany. — *Maclear*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

S. H. Tyng's *Serial Discourses*, "The Second Advent." Greene's *Glimpses of the Coming*. D. L. Moody's *Sermons*, "The Second Coming of Christ." Whiton's *Essay on the Gospel according to Matthew*. *Sermons*, by Robertson, "Waiting for the Second Advent;" by George Shepard, "Christ's Comings;" by H. W. Beecher, series 3, "Watchfulness." Dr. Dorchester's *Problem of Religious Progress*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Watch. There is an Eastern fable that a man waited 1,000 years before the gates of Paradise, watching continuously for them to open so that he might enter, and then fell asleep for one short hour. But during that hour the gates opened and were shut again, and he was left out.

II. My words shall not pass away. Dr. Dorchester has shown, by the most careful statistics, that Christianity has been steadily gaining from the very first, and is now gaining more rapidly than ever. So that, if the ratio of gain for the next 120 years should be as great as for the last 50 years, the whole world would be converted by the year A. D. 2,000. More Bibles have been sold, and more books written about the Bible, than ever before. More than 3,500,000 copies of the Revised New Testament were sold within two months after its issue. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 21-23. Wherever there is any thing true, of value, there are sure to be counterfeits.

2. A thorough knowledge of the truth is the surest safeguard against error.

3. Vers. 24-26. Christ is not a dead, but a living, Saviour.

4. Out of all the tribulations and commotions of the world, Christ's kingdom is coming, safe, triumphant, and glorious.

5. Ver. 31. This world and the heavens are to pass away.

6. But God's truth, his promises, and his threatenings, never fail.

7. Ver. 35. It is the Christian's duty to be watching and waiting for the coming of his Lord.

8. He watches and waits best by doing the duties Christ has laid upon him.

9. It is a great comfort that Christ and his kingdom are to triumph at last. We belong to a successful, and not a failing, cause.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The title of this lesson suggests the subject, WATCHING AND PRAYER. The lesson suggests four reasons for this: (1) *Because of the danger of being deceived*, vers. 21-23; a danger which still continues. (2) *Because of great commotions and changes*, vers. 24, 25. Watch against doubt, against fear that the truth itself will fail, against neglect of duty, as if it were in vain. (3) *Because Christ is coming again* (vers. 26-31), and we must be waiting for our Lord. (4) *Because the time of his coming is unknown*, vers. 32-37. Be ready whenever he shall come, and *pray*, lest we fail in duty or in patience.

LESSON XIII. — SEPTEMBER 24.

REVIEW.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Bunyan's Pilgrim had not gone far in his Christian life before he came to the *Interpreter's House*, where he was shown many living pictures illustrating various phases of life, its dangers, and hopes, and sources of strength. This quarter's lesson may be used as an *Interpreter's House*, where we shall find many

LIVING PICTURES ILLUSTRATING LIFE.

Introductory. Examine on the *time, places, portion of Christ's ministry*, and *principal persons*, mentioned in the lessons of the quarter.

I. A picture of home life, Lesson I. Here we are taught that God instituted home. We can picture out what kind of a place it should be, — a place where Jesus would love to abide, as he did in the home of Mary. We have also a picture of children in the home, with what Christ did for them, and said to them.

II. Illustrations of the Christian life, Lessons II., IV., VI., VII., IX., X., XI., XII. The various needs, duties, and privileges of the Christian life are illustrated. In II., the need of eternal life, of giving up all to Jesus, and the hundredfold reward. In IV., the need of light, of opened eyes, given to us through that faith which overcomes all obstacles. In VI., the danger of being fruitless, and the curse upon it; and, in VI. and VII., the power of faith, and the promises to faith, together with the duty of forgiving. In IX., we see a living God, and the certainty of a future life. In X., we find the sum of our duties toward God and man. In XI., we see the sufferings of Christians, and the certainty of their salvation by faith. In XII., we learn the duty of watchfulness and prayer.

III. Helps in our public life, Lessons II., III., V., VIII., IX., X. In II., we are shown the danger of riches, and how to escape it. In III., we have an example of moral heroism, an illustration of false ambition, and instruction in the nature of true greatness. In V., we find an example of public praise and honor to Christ, and see him as a triumphant king, the rightful king of the world. In VIII., we see this world as the vineyard of God, blessed so long as used for him. But those who would reject Christ as their king, and who usurp the vineyard to themselves, are destroyed. In IX., we learn our duty to earthly rulers and to God. In X., we have an illustration of true giving.

IV. A strange Bible-class, Lessons VII., IX., X. Christ is the teacher; and the scribes and Pharisees come to him with various questions of great interest to them, which Christ answers wisely. The question as to his authority, — how answered; as to their duty to the government, — how answered; as to the future life, — his answer; and as to which is the greatest commandment, — and Christ's answer.

V. Visions from Olivet, Lessons XI., XII. In these lessons is found a vision of the future, — what troubles are to come, the safety of God's people, that it is by faith and patience, the second coming of Christ, the triumph of the gospel.

FOURTH QUARTER.

From October 1, to December 31, 1882.

LESSON I. — OCTOBER 1.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. — MARK 14: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *She hath done what she could.* — MARK 14: 8.

TIME. — Consultation of priests and scribes at Jerusalem, and agreement of Judas to betray Jesus (vers. 1, 2, 10, 11), Tuesday evening, April 4, A. D. 30, just after the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world (Lessons XI. and XII., Third Quarter). *The anointing at Bethany* (vers. 3-9) was three days earlier (John 12: 1), Saturday, April 1, soon after the healing of the blind men at Jericho (Lesson IV., Third Quarter), and the evening before his public entrance into Jerusalem.

PLACE. — *Jerusalem*, at the palace of Caiaphas, where the priests and scribes were plotting against Jesus; *Bethany*, where the supper was given, when Mary anointed him.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — The plotting against Jesus (vers. 1, 2, 10, 11) is recorded also, Matt. 26: 1-5; 14-16. Luke 22: 1-6. The supper (3-9) in Matt. 26: 6-13. John 12: 2-8. For harmony of events, see Chart and Chronological Table.

INTRODUCTION.

After the discourse to the disciples (Lessons XI. and XII., Third Quarter), Jesus tells the disciples of his betrayal to be crucified at the feast of the passover, two days afterwards (Matt. 26: 1). At the same hour probably, his enemies at Jerusalem were plotting to arrest him (Matt. 26: 3). The supper at Bethany was the immediate origin of the treachery of Judas (Mark 14: 4, and John 12: 4, 5), and therefore it is given in this place.

1. After ¹two days was *the feast of the passover*, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

Now after two days was *the 1 feast of the passover* and the unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him with subtlety, and kill

¹ Matt. 26: 2. Luke 22: 1. John 11: 55; 13: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Conspiracy of the Rulers.** — Vers. 1, 2. 1. After two days. It was Tuesday evening, and the passover was Thursday evening. The feast of the passover and of unleavened bread. The passover meal was the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted for seven days. The whole paschal week was termed the feast of unleavened bread: the passover was, strictly speaking, the 15th of Nisan, "the great day of the feast." — *Cook*. For account of passover, see next lesson. The chief priests and the scribes (members of the Sanhedrim) sought how they might take him. The meeting of the chief priests and the scribes for consultation was at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest (Matt. 26: 3), (which tradition places on the "Hill of Evil Counsel"). From the fact that the council met at the palace of Caiaphas, and also that its session was in the evening, we may infer that it was an extraordinary meeting, held for secret consultation. This plotting was begun at least three months before, after the raising of Lazarus (John 11: 47); and more recently the triumphal entry, the driving out the money-

2. But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3. ¶ ¹ And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

him; for they said, Not during a the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people.

And while he was in Beth-3 any in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and

¹ Matt. 26:6. John 12:1, 3. See Luke 7:37.

changers from the temple, the parables spoken against the Jewish leaders, seem to have enraged them, so that they felt that something must be done immediately to put a stop to his career. No doubt there was long debate. Some certainly opposed the putting him to death, as Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:51), and Nicodemus (John 7:50, 51), who were members of the Sanhedrim. For an instance of the debate in a like meeting for the same purpose, see John 11:46-51.—*P.* The first step in putting Christ to death was taken by the religious teachers of the Jewish nation. The very men who ought to have welcomed the Messiah were the men who conspired to kill him. They claimed to be "guides of the blind," and "lights of them which were in darkness." Yet they were the very men who crucified the Lord of glory! With all their boasted knowledge they were far more ignorant than the few Galilean fishermen who followed Christ.—*Ryle.* By craft. With subtlety. That is, by some secret plan that would secure possession of him without exciting the opposition of the people.—*Barnes.*

2. They said, Not on the feast day. Not merely the feast day; i.e., the day on which the passover was sacrificed and eaten, but at any time during the festal season, which lasted for seven days. On these occasions Jerusalem was thronged with pilgrims.—*Abbott.* They would keep him out of the way, entirely quiet, so long as the feast lasted, and after that would kill him. But at the very time they were saying, "Not during the feast," Christ was telling the disciples (Matt. 26:1-5) that he should be crucified at the time of the passover.—*P.* Lest there be an uproar. The rulers feared a popular rising on the part of those numerous friends who had come from a distance with him, and of whom they did not feel themselves the masters, as they did of the population of Jerusalem.—*Godet.* Before they separated, a message reached them from Judas, which shot a gleam of fierce joy into their hearts, while we may well imagine that it also filled them with something of surprise and awe.—*Farrar.*

II. The Anointing of Jesus.—Vers. 3-9. This anointing is not to be confounded with the anointing mentioned in Luke 7:36-50. There is nothing in common between them, except the name of the householder, Simon; and this was a very common name in Palestine. The occasion, the time, the parties, and the spiritual significance are all different. The repetition of the incident is not at all strange. "An act of this kind, which had been once commended by our Lord (as in Luke), was very likely to have been repeated."—*Abbott.*

3. Being in Bethany. See *Time.* Jesus arrived in Bethany Friday; and the supper was Saturday evening, just after the close of the Jewish sabbath, and, as John expressly states (12:1), the evening before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Bethany. A village about two miles east of Jerusalem (John 11:18), being on the other side of the Mount of Olives. It was the home of Mary and Martha, where Christ was wont to visit when in Jerusalem (Luke 10:38-41. Matt. 21:17. Mark 11:11, 12). It was the scene of the resurrection of Lazarus (John, chap. 11), and of Christ's own ascension (Luke 24:50). It is not mentioned in the Old Testament.—*Abbott.* Simon the leper. Perhaps he had been healed of his leprosy by Jesus. He dwelt in Bethany. It is natural to suppose that he had made Jesus a feast in gratitude. According to a tradition, he was the father of Lazarus; according to others, he was the husband of Martha, or Martha was his widow. Very likely he was in some way related to the family of Lazarus.—*Lange.* Both families may have occupied the same house; or Simon may have been the owner, and Lazarus his tenant.—*Schaff.* Mary and Martha served (John 12:2). There came a woman. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12:3), not the woman in Luke 7, "who was a sinner." The latter person is generally, but without reason, identified with Mary Magdalene, and the three women confounded.—*Schaff.* Having an alabaster box, or flask, called an alabaster; as we say, "a glass." These *alabastra*, or unguent flasks, were usually made of the Oriental or onyx alabaster, with long narrow necks, which let the oil escape drop by drop, and could easily be broken. But the shape and material varied. Herodotus (3:20) mentions an "*alabastron* of fragrant oil"—the precise expression in the text—sent among

other royal gifts of gold and purple by Cambyses to the king of Ethiopia. — *Cambridge Bible*. Ointment of spikenard. The American



ALABASTER FLASKS.

portion of the Revision Committee would render this "pure nard" (with marginal reading, or *liquid nard*). Spikenard, from which the ointment was made, was an aromatic herb of the valerian family (*Nardo stachys jatamansi*). It was imported from an early age from Arabia, India, and the Far East. — *Smith*. The ointment of nard was highly esteemed, and was a costly luxury. — *P*. Very precious. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity, and was sold throughout the Roman Empire, where it fetched a price that put it beyond any but the wealthy. Mary had bought a vase or flask of it containing twelve ounces (John 12: 3). — *Cambridge Bible*. Compare the valuation put upon it by Judas: "three hundred pence," equal to £9, or \$45, — a

large amount for those days. — *Schaff*. The costliness of Mary's offering may best be seen from the fact that a penny (denarius, 15 to 17 cents) was in those days the day-wages of a laborer (Matt. 20: 2). In our day this would equal at least \$300 or \$400. — *P*. The value of the ointment only expressed the depth of her love. — *Thomas*. She brake the box; i.e., she broke the narrow neck of the small flask, and poured the perfume, first on the head and then on the feet of Jesus (John 12: 3) (the Oriental custom of reclining at table made the latter easier



RECLINING AT MEALS.

than the former), drying them with the hair of her head. She did not wish to keep or hold back any thing. She offered up all, gave away all; and her "all" was a tribute worthy of a king. — *Nuclear*. It is the essence of true love to sacrifice *all* to its object. Did he pour out his soul unto death for us, and shall we think any box of ointment too precious to pour upon him? — *Henry*. Poured it on his head. Anointing with oil was a primitive custom of consecration (Gen. 18: 18). It was then used for the ritual consecration of priests; occasionally, also, of prophets. The anointing of the head was also a distinction which was conferred upon the guest of honor (Luke 7: 46), — not only among the Jews, but generally in the East, and among the ancients. In connection with the anointing of the head, was the washing of the feet with water. Thus it was an elevation of the custom to the highest point of honor when the head and the feet were alike anointed with oil. — *Lange*. Mary may have intended only to show this honor; but this action symbolized Christ's Messiahship, and had a deeper significance, as our Lord points out in ver. 8. — *Schaff*. Probably Mary could not speak her feelings; and yet, in view of what her Saviour was soon to suffer, she wanted him to be assured that their hearts and sympathies were with him in his great trial so soon to come. — *P*. Even this was infinitely too little to satisfy the love of her who gave, or the dignity of Him to whom the gift was given. — *Farrar*.

4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred ¹pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

poured it over his head. But 4 there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, Let her alone; 6 why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

¹ See Matt. 18 : 28.

4. Some that had indignation. St. Matthew (26:8) states that "*the disciples*" had indignation; St. Mark reports that "*some* had indignation;" St. John (12:4), as knowing who had whispered the first word of blame, fixes the uncharitable judgment on "Judas Iscariot, Simon's son." The narrow, covetous soul of the traitor could see nothing in the lavish gift but a "waste." His indignation, partly real, partly affected, was perhaps honestly shared by some of his fellow-disciples, probably by those of the third group, with whom he came most into contact, and of whom we may well think as having a less glowing love, and narrower sympathies, than the others. — *Ellicott*. Judas, we are told by John, was treasurer of the little company. They must have had a meagre purse; and it was too much for him to see all this money thrown away on the mere sentiment of love, when it might have gone into their treasury, from which he could steal it, for he was a thief. But he concealed his true motive, and gained the really good disciples over to his side by pleading high principle, the love of the poor. So ever are wicked men getting good men to favor their bad schemes by pretence of high motives. — *P*. Why was this waste? Worldly men would of course agree with the idea of Judas, that money laid out in the cherishing or expression of mere devotional sentiment is "waste." There is no waste in anything that helps the soul. — *Thomas*. They who regard any large contribution to objects of Christian benevolence as waste, who would rebuke it and avoid it as *thrown away*, find themselves partaking of the spirit of Judas, and may soon be found also betraying the Master for sordid gain, even for one-half the amount they had grudged to his cause. — *Jacobus*.

5. Three hundred pence. About \$45. A penny here is the denarius, a Roman silver coin worth 15 to 17 cents. The wretch, who is just going to sell the only Son of God for 30 pence (pieces of silver), values at 300 a little ointment, perfume, and vapor. — *Quesnel*. Been given to the poor. True; and it was also true that the individual who might be supposed to buy it could, instead of buying it, give his money to the poor. Must he not buy it, then? Must no one buy it? And must the poor cease to cull the plant, and prepare the perfume, that it may be sold to the rich? Must there be nothing used in life but the barest and most absolute necessities? Must all fine arts and elegances be abolished? It is evident that the grumblers were taking extremely narrow views of what is good for human society in general, and for the poor in particular. — *Morison*. The true friends of the poor, who give most and do most for them, will always be found among those who do most for Christ. It is the successors of Mary of Bethany, and not of Judas Iscariot, who really "care for the poor." — *Ryle*. Murmured against her. Scolded her. — *De Wette*. Addressed her harshly. — *Meyer*. They expressed their dissatisfaction, not only at but to her. — *Alexander*. The murmuring was without cause. It was the property of Mary. She had a right to dispose of it as she pleased, answerable not to *them*, but to *God*. They had no right over it, and no cause of complaint if it *had* been wasted. So Christians *now* are at liberty to dispose of their property as they please, either in distributing the Bible, in supporting the gospel, in sending it to heathen nations, or in aiding the poor. The world, like Judas, esteems it to be *wasted*. Like Judas, they are indignant. They say it might be disposed of in a better way. Yet, like Judas, they are interfering in that which concerns them not. Like other men, Christians have a right to dispose of their property as they please, answerable only to God. — *Barnes*.

6. Jesus said, Let her alone. *Let her alone*, is the language of sharp rebuke. Christ was indignant at the hypocrisy which made a pretended consideration of the poor an excuse for attacking and condemning an act of love towards himself. The answer of Jesus indicates the woman's cordial, unstudied sacrifice; and not hers only, but the offerings of humble loyalty and silent love to him in all the earth. And to all that sit at his feet an follow in his steps, in the spirit of her who poured the fragrant offering on his head, he is ready to speak the same benediction with his infinite love, hiding in it the sure promise of life everlasting. — *F. D. Huntington*. Why trouble ye her? This indicates

7. For ¹ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good : but me ye have not always.

8. She hath done what she could : she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

For ye have the poor always ⁷ with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good : but me ye have not always. She ⁸ hath done what she could : she hath anointed my body aforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, ⁹ Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

¹ Deut. 15 : 11.

that Mary was herself abashed and downcast by the criticism of the twelve. Perhaps, as Maurice says, "She could not herself have answered Judas Iscariot's complaining question." — *Abbott*. She hath wrought a good work on me. Rather, a noble and beautiful work denoting a delicate and refined, almost artistic, sense of the fitness of things, which was lacking to the blunter perception of the rest. — *Cambridge Bible*. Christ measured the moral quality of the act by the motive, the disciples by its seeming utility. — *Schaff*. To express love to Christ, is to render a good work unto Christ. — *Abbott*. It was a good work. For (1) Love in the heart must express itself, must make some sacrifice for the loved. (2) There is great value to those that receive these expressions. Sympathy with the poor, expressed by gifts, is worth many times the same gifts without the sympathy. There is great hunger in the world for expressions of affection ; and the world would be vastly happier if the affection really existing between parents and children, husbands and wives, pastors and people, teachers and taught, were more often and more fully expressed. (3) Love is increased by expressing it. Scarcely any thing can awake into conscious activity our love for Jesus so much as making sacrifices for him. — *P*.

7. Ye have the poor with you always. You will have plenty of opportunities to aid them ; and the more they did for their Master, the more they would do for the poor, for the poor are left in his stead, and through them will be expressed the increased love of the Master. It is the want of *love*, not of money, that allows any poor to suffer ; so that all gifts to Christ which increase our love will increase the gifts to the poor. — *P*. Christ, who became poor that he might make many rich, teaches that there are more ways of doing good than almsgiving. All heavenly charity is not bound up in bags of flour. Try to measure the amount of bread which would have been provided by the 300 pence with the fragrance that was exhaled from this woman's deed into millions of weary hearts among the poorest of the poor. — *Ker*. This act ought not to be cited to defend expensive modes of worship at the cost of neglecting the poor. — *Schaff*.

8. She hath done what she could. This praise is more precious than the ointment, coming from such an one as Christ. It is like that which he passed upon the poor widow : "She hath cast in all that she had." Blessed are they of whom the Master will say, "They have done what they could." But how different is the spirit of those, who, instead of doing what they can, are always complaining of inability, and finding fault with God ! — *Jacobus*. Come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. She has anticipated the hour of my decease ; anointing my body before death, and thus preparing it for burial. It is worthy of note that this was all the anointing which our Lord's body received from the hand of Mary or her female friends, inasmuch as he had risen before they reached the sepulchre with their spices. It was, therefore, in verity an anointing beforehand, although she was not aware of the full import of her act of love. — *Owen*.

9. Wheresoever this gospel. The tidings of salvation, with special reference to Christ's death, just alluded to. — *Schaff*. Preached throughout the whole world. A prediction of the world-wide preaching of his death. This also that she hath done . . . a memorial. Fulfilled to the letter. It is right to record and remember the good deeds of those who love Christ ; but when the desire to be put on record enters, the ointment is spoiled. This is the only case where such a promise is made : therefore the incident has a weighty lesson, and holds up a noble example. — *Schaff*. The deeds and titles of many a king and emperor and general are as completely forgotten as if written in the sand ; but the grateful act of one humble Christian woman is recorded in two hundred and twenty-five different languages, and is known all over the globe. The praise of man is but for a few days : the praise of Christ endureth forever. The pathway to lasting honor, is to honor Christ. — *Kyle*. The pyramids shall moulder to the dust, monuments of brass and marble shall decay, but the monument here raised to this woman's excellence shall stand forever. — *Dr. Thomas*.

10. ¶ ¹And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

And Judas Iscariot, he that so was one of the twelve, went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him unto them. And they, when ¹¹ they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently deliver him *unto them*.

¹ Matt. 26: 14. Luke 22: 3, 4.

III. The Treachery of Judas.—Vers. 10, 11. 10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve. The narrative of St. John leads us, as has been said, to connect the act of treachery with the fact just recorded. There was the shame, and therefore the anger, of detected guilt; there was the greed of gain that had been robbed of its expected spoil, and thirsted for compensation. The purpose that had been formed by the priests and scribes after the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11: 47) may well have become known, and have suggested the hope of a reward. All these feelings were gathering strength through the three days that followed. Possibly there mingled with them a sense of disappointment that the kingly entry into Jerusalem was not followed up by immediate victory. St. Luke's words, that "Satan entered into Judas" (Luke 22: 3), are remarkable, (1) as implying the personal influence of the Tempter; (2) as indicating the fiendish tenacity with which he followed out his purpose; (3) as coinciding with what St. John (13: 27) relates at a later stage of his guilt.—*Plumptre*. (See on Lesson V. of this quarter.) Went unto the chief priests. *When* this took place, does not appear. In all probability, immediately after the conclusion of our Lord's discourses, and therefore coincidently with the meeting of the Sanhedrim, in ver. 2. To betray him unto them; i.e., to make his proposals and to bargain with them, as appears from Matthew's fuller statement (chap. 26), which says, he "went unto the chief priests, and said, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver," or shekels, equal to \$16.50. A shekel is about 55 cents.—*J. F. and B.* On one side of these shekels would be the olive-branch (three flowers), the emblem of peace; on the obverse, the censor, the type of prayer, with the inscription, "Jerusalem the holy."—*Cambridge*.



A SHEKEL.

11. They were glad. Not only because there now opens to them the prospect of the fulfilment of their intended wishes, but also because among Jesus' disciples themselves a spirit of unfaithfulness and hatred begins to reveal itself.—*Lange*. Promised to give him money. It is a terrible judgment upon a sinner for him to find means of putting his wicked designs in execution, and for God to permit him to meet with no manner of obstacles therein.—*Quesnel*. Sought how. (Matthew, opportunity.) A time and place suited to the crafty policy of the Sanhedrim. To betray him; or, "deliver him up." Judas was not merely to tell where they could take him, but himself to be the active agent in taking him, and transferring him into the hands of his enemies (see Matt. 26: 47-50); so that "betray" is the real meaning.—*Schaff*. Christian, rejoice! for you have got the best in this bargain between your enemies. What Judas sold, and the Jew bought, belongs to you. For Christ is ours, and not the property of the Jews who bought him.—*Ludolphus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The spirit of sacrifice. This is the spirit which offers precious things, simply because they are precious, not as being necessary to the building, but as an offering and sacrifice of what is to ourselves desirable. . . . This is a good and just feeling, and as well pleasing to God and honorable to men as it is beyond all dispute necessary to the produc-

tion of any great work in the kind with which we are at present concerned. In the Levitical sacrifice, costliness was generally a condition of the acceptableness of the sacrifice. That costliness must be an acceptable condition in all human offerings, at all times, — an external sign of their love and obedience, and surrender of themselves and theirs to his will. It is not the Church we want, but the sacrifice; not the emotion of admiration, but the act of adoration; not the gift, but the giving. — *Ruskin*.

II. Giving to God and the poor. The question is not between God's poor and his house; it is not between God's house and his gospel: it is between God's house and ours. Have we no tessellated colors on our floors? no frescoed fancies on our roofs? no gilded furniture in our chambers? Have even the tithe of these been offered? I say this emphatically, that a tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic discomforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively offered and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England, such as would be a joy and a blessing, even to pass near it in our daily walks. — *Ruskin*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. The wicked desire to put out of the way the good who interfere with their plans.
2. Ver. 3. Christ ate together with his friends in full view of his cross. Eating together may transfigure the physical by the spiritual, and the meal-times of the family be times of special blessing.
3. Affection desires to express itself in costly sacrifices for the loved.
4. The motive, the love, gives value to the deed; as Hermon and Pisgah were but common mountains till Christ was transfigured on the one, and Moses saw the promised land from the other.
5. Ver. 4. The worldly heart can never understand the blessedness and power of enthusiasm, and gifts of love.
6. Ver. 5. Bad men always put forward good motives for their bad deeds.
7. Ver. 6. Expressions of affection are of great value. We all need sympathy, and that it be expressed, especially the poor, the sick, the sorrowing.
8. God does not need our gifts; he is rich enough without: but he wants the *giving*, the spirit of sacrifice.
9. Expressing love increases love.
10. The gifts for the gospel, for the Church, for Christ's sake, always increase the gifts to the poor.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The subject of to-day's lesson is EXPRESSING OUR LOVE TO JESUS. (1) *The precious gift* (ver. 3). Why it was precious. Describe the scene as given in the harmony of all the Evangelists. Why Mary did this act. (2) *The censure of Judas* (vers. 4, 5). The real and the ostensible reason; how he obtained the aid of the other disciples. What is waste, and what is not. (3) *The approval of Christ* (vers. 6-9). The value of expressions of our love. Why God loves to have us make sacrifices for him. How these increase the gifts to the poor. Christ never forgets. (4) *A contrast* (vers. 1, 2, 10, 11). The exact opposite of Mary's character and deed.

LESSON II. — OCTOBER 8.

THE PASSOVER. — MARK 14:12-21.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover.* — EXOD. 12:27.

TIME. — Thursday evening, April 6 (14th Nisan), A. D. 30. The paschal lamb was slain between three and six o'clock in the afternoon, but was eaten after sunset (the 15th of Nisan).

PLACE. — Bethany, from which place Jesus sent his disciples to prepare for the passover at Jerusalem, where it was eaten in an upper room.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome; Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Caiaphas, high priest; Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 26:17-25. Luke 22:7-18, 21-23. John 13:21-26.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Christ spends Tuesday eve, all day Wednesday, and part of Thursday, in retirement at Bethany.

HARMONY OF EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER.

		MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
1	Preparations for the supper	26: 17-19	14: 12-16	22: 7-13	...
2	Christ goes to Jerusalem	" 20	" 17	" 14	...
3	Strife among the disciples for the first place	" ...	" ...	" 24	...
4	Christ rebukes them by washing their feet	" ...	" ...	" 24-30	13: 1-20
5	All take their places at the passover supper	" 20	" ...	" 14-18	" ...
6	Announcement of the traitor	" 21-25	" 18-21	" 21-23	" 21-30
7	Judas' departure	" ...	" ...	" ...	" 31-32
8	Institution of the Lord's Supper	" 26-29	" 22-25	" 19-20	" ...
9	The warning to Peter	" 30-35	" 26-31	" 31-38	" 33-38
10	Christ promises the Comforter	" ...	" ...	" ...	14: 1-31
11	They rise from the table	" ...	" ...	" ...	31
12	While standing around him in the room, Christ utters his last discourse	" ...	" ...	" ...	15: 1-16: 33
13	Closing with a prayer	" ...	" ...	" ...	17: 1-26
14	After singing a hymn, they go out to the Mount of Olives	" 36	" 26, 32	" 39	18: 1

INTRODUCTION.

After his discourse on future things to his disciples, while sitting on Mount Olivet on Tuesday eve, Jesus goes on to Bethany, where he spends Wednesday and the most part of Thursday in retirement, in private meditation, preparing for his great trial. Had he conversed much, John would have made some record of it. In the mean time he sends his disciples to Jerusalem to prepare for the passover.

12. ¶ ¹ And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover, his disciples say unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and make ready that thou mayest eat

¹ Matt. 26: 17. Luke 22: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Passover.—Ver. 12. 12. And the first day of unleavened bread. That is, the first day, viz., Thursday, the 14th day of Nisan. The feast of the unleavened bread, or the passover, properly began on the 15th (just after sunset of the 14th) of Abib or Nisan, and lasted seven days. But the preceding day, the 14th, was the one appointed for the slaying of the lamb; and on the evening of that day the paschal supper was eaten (Exod. 12: 6. Lev. 23: 5). It was, therefore, termed the first day of the feast.—*Abbott*. On the discussion of the difficult question whether the supper which our Lord ate with his disciples on Thursday evening was the true paschal supper, or whether the latter fell on Friday evening, the same as that of his crucifixion, see Andrews's *Life of Christ* (pp. 367-397), Robinson's *Harmony*, and Smith's *New Testament History* (p. 288). The weight of opinion is strongly in favor of the view that Christ ate the real passover supper on the evening following Thursday, the 14th of Nisan. **Unleavened bread.** The whole seven days of the feast was so called because leaven was rigidly excluded during the whole time.—This specially symbolized three things: (1) The haste with which they fled from Egypt, not having time to wait for bread to rise (Exod. 12: 34, 39). (2) Their sufferings in Egypt, hence called the bread of affliction (Deut. 16: 3), and hence all the afflictions of the bondage of sin. But (3) chiefly their purity as a consecrated nation, since fermentation is incipient putrefaction, and leaven was thus a symbol of impurity.—*F. H. Newhall*. All leaven was scrupulously removed about noon on the 14th.—*Smith*. **When they killed the passover.** The lamb was to be selected on the tenth day, and kept up till the fourteenth day, in the evening of which day it was to be killed (Exod. 12: 3-6). A male lamb was demanded, not more than one year old, and without blemish.—*Schaff's Bible Dictionary*. **The passover.** The word *passover* signifies a *passing*, and commemorates the manner in which the Israelites were spared in Egypt when the Almighty *passed over* their houses, sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, without slaying their first-born. This name, which originally denoted the lamb, was applied later to the supper itself, then to the entire feast (Exod. 12).—*God. it.* (See Illustrative, I.) The *passover* was the feast of spring, after the death of winter; the national birthday feast; the springtime of grace, pointing to the birth of the true Israel. Jewish tradition has this conceit: that the most important events in

13. And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

the passover? And he sendeth 13 two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of wa-

Israel's history were connected with the paschal season, — Abraham's vision (Gen. 15), Lot's escape from Sodom, the fall of Jericho's walls, the destruction of the Midianites by Gideon, the fall of Sennacherib, the salvation by Esther; and they expected that at the same season would take place the final judgment on their enemies and the glorious deliverance of Israel. The rabbis claimed that, (1) all were to be present; (2) they must offer thanksgiving offerings; (3) it was a feast of joyousness, looking forward to their complete deliverance. — *From Edersheim's Temple, etc.*

THE PASSOVER AS A TYPE OF CHRIST AND HIS SUPPER.

(1) It was a *lamb*, as Christ was the Lamb of God. (2) *A male of the first year.* In its prime. (3) *Without blemish*, as Christ was perfectly pure, without spot. (4) *Set apart four days before, the 10th of Nisan.* Christ's triumphal entry was four days before the crucifixion, on the 10th. (5) *It was slain, and roasted with fire*, denoting the death and exquisite sufferings of Christ. (6) It was killed between the two evenings, three to six o'clock. Christ suffered at the end of the world. He died at this same hour, and at the passover feast. (7) Each person must have a slain lamb. So Christ died for all. (8) Not a bone was broken. (9) It was eaten with bitter herbs of repentance. (10) Its blood must be applied to be effectual. (11) It looked forward to future deliverance, and became, after the death, a feast of hope and joy. (12) It was a feast of separation from the world; and (13) of protection as God's children. — *Chiefly from M. Henry.*

MODE OF CELEBRATING THE SUPPER.

From 10 to 20 persons gathered as one household. The rites of the feast were regulated by the succession of the cups, filled with red wine, commonly mixed with water. (1) *Announcement of the feast.* The head of the house pronounced the thanksgiving or benediction over the wine and the feast. In the form used, the words "fruit of the vine" occur. The first cup was then drunk; then the washing of hands, after praise. (2) *The eating of the bitter herbs*, dipped in vinegar or salt water, in remembrance of the sorrows in Egypt. Meanwhile the paschal dishes were brought in, — the well-seasoned broth (called *charoseth*), the unleavened loaves, the festal offerings, and the lamb. All these things were then explained. They sang the first part of the Hallel, or song of praise (Ps. 113, 114), and the second cup was drunk. (3) Then began the *feast proper* (at which they reclined, because only slaves stood, and they were now freemen): the householder took two loaves, broke one in two, laid it upon the whole loaf, blessed it, wrapped it with bitter herbs, dipped it, ate of it, and banded it round with the words, "This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in Egypt." He then blessed the paschal lamb, and ate of it; the festal offerings were eaten with the bread, dipped in the broth; and finally the lamb. The thanksgiving for the meal followed the blessing and drinking of the third cup. With this cup our Lord connected his own supper. — *Edersheim.* (4) *The remainder of the Hallel* was sung (Ps. 115-118), and the fourth cup drunk. Occasionally a fifth cup followed, while Ps. 120-127 were pronounced; but this was the extreme limit. — *Schaff.*

II. The Preparation for the Passover. — Vers. 12-16. His disciples said unto him. It appears from a comparison of the accounts that the disciples came, while they were at Bethany on Thursday morning, to inquire about keeping the passover (Matt. 26: 17); and that there the conversation took place as recorded in vers. 12-15. On this solemn errand the chief apostles were sent. — *Riddle.* Where wilt thou. They may have expected, considering the complete seclusion of Wednesday, that he would eat it at Bethany; for "the village was reckoned, as regards religious purposes, part of Jerusalem by the rabbis, and the lamb might be eaten there, though it must be killed at the temple." — *Lightfoot.* That we go and prepare. The lamb had, we may believe, already been bought on the 10th of Nisan, according to the rule of the law, the very day on which he, the true paschal Lamb, entered Jerusalem in meek triumph. — *Cambridge Bible.* That thou mayest eat. Note the reverential feeling that dominated the disciples. They did not say, in order that "we" may eat the passover. They hid themselves behind their Lord. — *Morison.*

13. Two of his disciples. Luke gives their names, — Peter and John. Saith unto them. There can be no question that this direction was given them in superhuman foresight. — *Alford.* The city. Jerusalem. A man bearing a pitcher of water. A very unusual sight in the East, where the water is drawn by women. He must probably have been the slave of one who was an open or secret disciple; unless we have here a reference to the Jewish custom of the master of a house himself drawing the water with which the unleavened bread was kneaded on Nisan 13. If so, the "man bearing a pitcher of water"

14. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15. And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

ter: follow him: and where-¹⁴ soever he shall enter in, say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is my guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will him-¹⁵ self show you a large upper room furnished *and* ready: and there make ready for us. And the disciples went forth,¹⁶ and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

may have even been the Evangelist St. Mark, in the house of whose mother, and probably in the very upper room where the last supper was held, the disciples used at first to meet (Acts 12:12). The mysteriousness of the sign was perhaps intended to baffle, as long as was needful, the machinations of Judas. — *Cambridge Bible*. On the evening of the 13th, before the stars appeared in the heavens, every father, according to Jewish custom, had to repair to the fountain to draw pure water with which to knead the unleavened bread. — *Godet*. If this is the man referred to, then the disciples must have gone Wednesday instead of Thursday to prepare for the passover.

14. To the goodman of the house; or, "master of the house." The expression *goodman*, as used by Tyndale, and preserved in our Authorized Version, is a relic of an olden time, when the heads of a household establishment expressed to one another, in their habitual intercourse, their mutual esteem. In some parts of the country the custom still lingers, and husbands and wives address each other as *goodman*, *goodwife*. — *Morison*. The (my) guest-chamber. The correct reading, "my," is suggestive. Our Lord lays claim to it, even though it were to be hired. — *Schaff*. During the passover week, hospitality was recognized as a universal duty in Jerusalem: pilgrims and strangers were received, and rooms were allotted to them for the celebration of the feast. But it is not probable that a room would have been given to entire strangers without previous arrangement; and the language which the disciples are instructed to use, *The Master saith unto thee*, seems to me clearly to indicate that the goodman of the house recognized Jesus as Master; in other words, was in some sense at least a disciple. Whether Christ had previously arranged with him for the use of a room, or whether the instruction to Peter and John was founded wholly on supernatural knowledge of the welcome which would be accorded to him, we have no means of knowing. The full message was, *My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples* (Matt. 26:18); *where is the guest-chamber?* etc. The disciples alone ate with Jesus: the host probably observed the passover in another room with his own household. — *Abbott*. This circumstantial detail is not without a special point. Judas was watching for an opportunity: had he known in what place our Lord was to be found out of the temple, arrest would have been easy. But two disciples only were sent; and even they would not know where our Lord would be that evening, for the unknown guide was to meet them on their arrival. — *Cook*. Thus, when Christ by his Spirit comes into the heart, he demands admission as

One whose own the heart is; and gains admission as One who has all power in the heart, and cannot be resisted. — *Henry*. "Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover?" the Master saith. It is a personal question, a proposal to the inner life of us all. It is an offer of the one infinite divine blessing; for, in receiving the Master, Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, we receive all the real good there is in earth and heaven. — *F. D. Huntington, D.D.*

15. Upper room. On the second floor. Some think it was the "Aljiah," or the room on the housetop. — *Schaff*. Furnished; i.e., with tables and couches. Prepared. Already swept, and clean, and in order for the feast. Even at the pres-



UPPER ROOM.

ent day, the very humblest Jewish family generally has at the passover time, "the walls of the house white-washed, the floor scrubbed, the furniture cleaned, and all things made to put on a new appearance" (*Mills's British Jews*). — *Morison*. Make ready. The further preparations necessary for the passover. — *Schaff*. A large upper room is a large heart

17. ¹ And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another *said, Is it I?*

And when it was evening he 17 cometh with the twelve. And 18 as they sat and were eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me, *even* he that eateth with me. They began to be sorrow- 19 ful, and to say unto him one

¹ Matt. 26 : 20, etc.

extended by charity, furnished and adorned with all Christian virtues, and prepared and made ready by repentance and purity. It is in such a heart that Christ delights to keep his passover. — *Quesnel*.

III. Events at this Passover. — Vers. 17-21. 17. In the evening. It was probably while the sun was beginning to decline in the horizon that Jesus and the disciples descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the Holy City. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. White tents dotted the sward, gay with the bright flowers of early spring, or peered out from the gardens and the darker foliage of the olive-plantations. From the gorgeous temple buildings, dazzling in their snow-white marble and gold, on which the slanting rays of the sun were reflected, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt-offering. The streets must have been thronged with strangers, and the flat roofs covered with eager gazers, who either feasted their eyes with a first sight of the sacred city, for which they had so often longed, or else once more rejoiced in view of the well-remembered localities. It was the last day-view which the Lord had of the Holy City, — till his resurrection. — *Edersheim's "The Temple and its Services,"* pp. 194, 195.

18. As they sat and did eat. Or, rather, "reclined at table." The passover was originally eaten standing; but this was altered by the Jews when they came to the land of promise and rest. — *Riddle*. Filling up St. Mark's narrative from the other Gospels, we may call to mind here the words of strong emotion with which the feast was opened (Luke 22 : 15); the dispute among the disciples, probably connected with the places which they were to occupy at the table (Luke 22 : 24); and our Lord's practical reproof of that dispute in washing his disciples' feet (John 13 : 1-11). Picturing the scene to ourselves, we may think of our Lord as reclining — not sitting — in the centre of the middle table; St. John next to him, and leaning on his bosom (John 13 : 23); St. Peter probably on the other side; and the others sitting in an order corresponding, more or less closely, with the threefold division of the twelve into groups of four. Upon the washing of the feet followed the teaching of John 13 : 12-20; and then came the "blessing" or "thanksgiving," which opened the meal. This went on in silence, while the countenance of the Master betrayed the deep emotion which troubled his spirit (John 13 : 21); and then the silence was broken by the awful words which are recorded in this verse. — *Plumptre*. One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. This indefinite announcement would give Judas an opportunity of repentance; but it produced no effect. — *Schaff*. The announcement by Jesus of his knowledge of the traitor was *needed*, to show the apostles that the manner of his arrest was no surprise to him. — *Stock*. The words would seem to have been intentionally vague, as if to rouse some of those who heard them to self-questioning. They had not, it is true, shared in the very guilt of the traitor; but they had yielded to tendencies which they had in common with him, and which were dragging them down to his level. They had joined him in his murmuring (ver. 4), and they had been quarrelling. It was well that the abyss should be laid bare before their eyes, and that each should ask himself whether he were indeed on the point of falling into it. — *Plumptre*. Melanchthon declares that the three greatest marks of pity and compassion are (1) to tolerate the wicked for a season; (2) to abstain from exposing their sins as long as possible; (3) to warn them plainly and gently before leaving them forever. These are strikingly exemplified in Christ's dealings with Judas. — *Stock*.

19. They began to be sorrowful. The very thought of treason was to their honest and faithful hearts insupportable, and excited great surprise and deepest sorrow. — *Cambridge Bible*. St. John (13 : 22) describes their perplexed and questioning glances at each other, the whisper of Peter to John, the answer of our Lord to the beloved disciple, announcing the sign by which the traitor was to be indicated. — *Plumptre*. Unto him. Not merely, as Alford, "to each other." They both inquired among themselves (Luke 22 : 23), and of Christ. Is it I? Their language expresses in the original a much stronger negation than in our version, — *Surely not I, Lord?* Compare their strong assertion that they will not deny him (Matt. 26 : 35). To their questioning, Christ makes no response. Not one of them ventures to question the truth of the Lord's prophecy; and each asks the personal question, "Is it I?" No one accuses, even by implication, his neighbor. Is not

20. And he answered and said unto them, *It is one* of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

21. ¹The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

by one, Is it I? And he said so unto them, *It is one* of the twelve, he that dippeth with me in the dish. For the Son ^{as} of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

¹ Matt. 26: 24. Luke 22: 22.

this a pattern for us in that self-examination which should always precede our seasons of sacred communion with our Lord (1 Cor. 11: 28)?—an examination which should look forward rather than backward; prepare for the future rather than attempt to measure the past; and always be a *self-examination*.—*Abbott*.

20. He answered. The intimation was made privately to John, to whom Peter had made a sign that he should ask who could be so base (John 13: 23-26). Probably Judas and most of the others did not hear this. Dippeth with me in the dish. He who is just about to dip with me a piece of the unleavened cakes into the *charoseth* (a sauce consisting of a mixture of vinegar, figs, dates, almonds, and spice), and to whom I shall give some of it presently.—*Cambridge Bible*. "Dipping the hand in the dish," also alludes to the Oriental custom of each helping himself with his fingers out of one dish.—*Stock*.

21. The Son of man indeed goeth. Luke, "As it hath been determined." The prophecy implied the purpose. The words must have recalled those of chap. 9: 12, and were, we may believe, meant to recall them. It was appointed that the Christ should suffer; but that appointment did not make men less free agents, nor diminish the guilt of treachery or injustice.—*Plumptre*. But. God's purposes include our freedom (compare Acts 2: 23). Woe unto that man. Stier, "The most affecting and melting lamentation of love, which feels the woe as much as holiness requires or will admit." Our Lord seems to forget his own woes in pity for this man. Good were it for that man, etc. A proverbial expression for the most terrible destiny, forbidding the thought of any deliverance, however remote. *Schaff*. Observe the incidental confirmation of the doctrine elsewhere taught, that for the finally lost soul there is no redemption.—*Abbott*. A man's existence is turned into a curse to him when he inverts the grand moral purpose contemplated in its divine origination.—*Morison*. After this, Judas, who probably had not heard the words about the sop, himself asks, "*Is it I?*" as if it would be suspicious if he only did not ask the question with the rest. Christ replies (Matt. 26: 25) that he is the one; and bids him do quickly what he proposes to do. Then Satan entered into him (John 13: 27). Satan whispered, "Be man enough to resent such exposure: your reputation here is gone, and you may as well go, and have your revenge—and your money."—*Cowles*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*, pp. 177-231. *Select Notes*, and *Lesson Commentary*, Lesson VI., Third Quarter, 1881. Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, chap. 5. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. For a discussion as to whether this was the regular passover, see Wescott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 316, on the one side; and, on the other, Andrews's *Life of Christ*, pp. 367-397, and Smith's *New Testament History*, p. 288.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. *Meaning of the passover.* The common notion of God's passing over the houses of the Israelites is, that in going through the land of Egypt to smite the first-born, seeing the blood on the door of the houses of the Israelites, he passed over, or skipped those houses, and forbore to smite them. But that this is not the true notion, will be plain from considering the words of the sacred historian where he describes very explicitly the action. "For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood on the lintels and on the two side posts, Jehovah will *spring forward over or before the door*, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you" (Exod. 12: 23). Here are manifestly two distinct agents,—the destroying angel passing through to smite every house; and Jehovah, the Protector, keeping pace with him, who, seeing the door of the Israelites marked with blood, leaps forward, throws himself with a sudden motion in the way (thus *passing over* the door), opposes the destroying angel, and protects and saves that house against him.—*Bishop Lowth*. The thought is expressed in Isa. 31: 5. God *passes over*, as a bird hovers over its nest to protect it.

II. *The passover as a type.* In making a bell, there is first formed a mould of the

exact shape of the outside of the bell. Then within this is placed another mould, whose outside is the exact shape desired for the inside of the bell; so that when the two are in place, there is between them the exact shape of the proposed bell. When the bell-metal is poured in, and cooled, the mould is broken away, but the bell remains. So the passover was a type, a mould, in which the permanent sacrifice was formed and explained; but when the reality came which was to abide forever, a living power, the type must pass away.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 12. Christ respected by careful observance the institutions of religion.
2. Reverence the old till the new has taken its place.
3. By means of the institutions and ceremonies of the old dispensation we learn the true nature of religion and the gospel.
4. Vers. 13, 14. Follow carefully the providences of God.
5. Vers. 17, 18. Note the social nature of our religion.
6. The worst enemies of Christ are those who pretend to be friends.
7. Vers. 18-21. God makes human wickedness to serve his purposes.
8. But none the less is it wickedness because overruled by God.
9. Ver. 19. Note the self-ignorance of the best of men.
10. True self-examination questions ourselves, not others. "Is it I?" not "Is it you?"
11. Christ gives sinners, even the worst, abundant warning, that they may repent.
12. There are those who will not repent, even under Christ's perfect example and infinite love.
13. Learn the dreadful doom of sinners.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We study to-day the PASSOVER AS PREFIGURING THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST. (1) *The feast of the passover* (ver. 12). Its nature, its origin, how celebrated, what it meant to the Jews, the lamb a type of Christ, and the feast as prefiguring the doctrines of the gospel salvation. (2) *Preparation for the passover* (vers. 12-16). (3) *The events at the passover*. The strife, the washing of the disciples' feet, the announcement of the traitor, the true self-examination, the doom of the impenitent.

LESSON III. — OCTOBER 15.

THE LORD'S SUPPER. — MARK 14: 22-31.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.* — 1 COR. 11: 26.

TIME. — Thursday evening, April 6 (14th Nisan), A. D. 30. Immediately following the passover supper. With the Jews the 15th Nisan had begun.

PLACE. — Jerusalem, in an upper room with the disciples. The prophecy of Peter's denial was on the way to Mount Olivet.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, of Galilee; Caiaphas, high priest.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 26: 26-36. Luke 22: 19, 20, 31-34. 1 Cor. 11: 23-26. The prophecy of Peter's denial (vers. 27-31) is given also in John 13: 36-38. Luke and John give the account of the first warning to Peter at the supper. Matthew and Mark give the second warning, which was a repetition of the first, and was given on the way to the Mount of Olives.

ORDER OF EVENTS. — See last lesson.

INTRODUCTION.

On the departure of the traitor (see last lesson), the Saviour, as though relieved of a heavy load, broke forth into words of mysterious triumph (John 13: 31-35), and then, as the protracted passover meal went on, proceeded to institute the Lord's Supper. — *Jacobus*. The Lord's Supper was probably instituted at the *third cup* of the passover (see last lesson), and thus the new dispensation was grafted on to the old. Most commentators think that Judas was not present at the Lord's Supper. (Lightfoot, however, in his racy *Battle with a Wasp's Nest*, contends that the traitor "received the sacrament." So others.)

22. ¶ ¹ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

And as they were eating, ²² he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. And he ²³ gave a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of

¹ Matt. 26: 26. Luke 22: 19. 1 Cor. 11: 23.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Institution of the Lord's Supper. — Vers. 22-26. 22. And as they did eat. Or, as they were eating. The Lord's Supper was instituted during the progress of the paschal supper, not as a separate ordinance at its close. — *Abbott*. Took bread. That is, one of the unleavened cakes that had been placed before him as the celebrant or proclaimer of the feast. — *Cambridge Bible*. Why did Christ ordain bread to be used in the Lord's Supper, and not a lamb? Canon Walsham How replies, "Because the types and shadows were to cease when the real Sacrifice was come. There was to be no more shedding of blood when once his all-prevailing blood was shed. There must be nothing which might cast a doubt upon the all-sufficiency of that." — *Stock*. Is there not also significance in the fact that he passed by the lamb, which in the future history of the Church it would often be inconvenient and sometimes impossible to provide, and took, as the symbol of his body, bread, which can always be obtained? — *Abbott*. And blessed. As was the custom. Luke and Paul say, "gave thanks," which is the same thing. — *Schaff*. It was customary for the father at the distribution of the bread to pronounce the benediction, "Blessed be He who causeth bread to grow out of the earth." But, says Grotius, "not so much for the old creation, rather for the new, for which he came into this world, he pours out prayer and renders thanks to God for the redemption of the human race, as though it were already accomplished." — *Abbott*. The blessing "changed the bread, not in substance, not in quantity, not in quality, — but in use, in purpose, in sanctity." — *Bishop Harold Browne*. Christ's act of breaking the bread had probably some special solemnity (see Luke 24: 30, 31). From it was derived the peculiar title of the sacrament in the early Church, "breaking of bread." Of its other names, "the communion" (with the term "communicant") is derived from 1 Cor. 10: 16, and "the Lord's Supper" from 1 Cor. 11: 20. — *Stock*. And brake. As a significant type of his body, which should be broken on the cross. — *Jacobus*. The bread that was broken was a round cake or cracker of unleavened bread. (See Lesson III., Second Quarter, for description.) Throughout the entire passover week no leavened bread was allowed in the house (Exod. 12: 8, 15). In the breaking and distribution of bread to others, is there not symbolized, not only our covenant and communion with Christ, but also our duty of breaking and distributing to others what we receive from him? — *Abbott*. Take, eat; this is my body. Luke adds, "which is given for you" (22: 19); Paul, "which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11: 24); and both add, "This do in remembrance of me." The bread, then, is, (1) a symbolic reminder that Christ is God's unspeakable gift to us (John 3: 16. 2 Cor. 9: 15); (2) that the gift is perfected, only in that he is broken for us (John 3: 14; 10: 15; 12: 32); (3) that it is efficacious, only as we partake of him, i.e., receive him into ourselves, so that he becomes one with us, as he is one with the Father (John 17: 23), as the bread when eaten becomes part of our nature, and so the sustainer of our life. — *Abbott*. This is my body. This form of expression grew out of the passover forms. That feast was a memorial; and when it was asked in the ceremonies, what these things meant, the method of reply was, "This is the body of the lamb which our fathers ate in Egypt." Not the same, but this is meant to represent and commemorate that. He could not have meant that the bread was his real body; because his body was present at the table breaking the loaf, and he was speaking and acting in person among them. — *Jacobus*. We interpret it as we do his other sayings: The seed is the word, The field is the world, The reapers are the angels, The harvest is the end of the world, I am the door, I am the vine. — *Bishop Browne*. He said almost the same words a year before he died (John 6: 48-58).

23. And he took the cup. Rather, "a cup." Four cups of wine were drunk at the passover. The first was taken at the beginning of the feast, and is generally supposed to be that mentioned (Luke 22: 17). The third and fourth cups were both taken after the conclusion of the meal: the former immediately followed the blessing after eating the paschal lamb, and was usually called the cup of blessing, the second part of the Hallel or hymn of praise being interposed between it and the fourth cup. The third cup is generally supposed to be the one mentioned here and Luke 22: 20, as may be inferred from the title

24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

it. And he said unto them, ²⁴ This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will ²⁵ no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

cup of blessing (1 Cor. 10: 16), and from the mention of the hymn as following. — *Cook*. Had given thanks. The communion should be an occasion, as the sacrifice of Christ should be for us an inspiration, of thanksgiving (Ps. 116: 13. Rev. 5: 6, 9). From the



CUPS.

Greek verb here rendered "gave thanks" (*eucharisteo*), comes one of the names frequently given to the ordinance, the Eucharist. — *Abbott*. They all drank of it. "All" is significant in view of the Romanist usage, which denies the cup to the laity. Whether Christ ate of the bread, and drank of the wine, has been a matter of some discussion. There is no clear answer to the question in the account. Chrysostom apparently thinks he did; Alford,

that he did not. James Morison suggests that "He was, as it were, giving himself to his disciples. To have given himself to himself, would have been to have either ignored or perplexed the profound significance of the ordinance." On the contrary, Luke implies his participation (see Luke 22: 15, 18). But if he did not participate, this would be no reason why the modern administrator should not partake. — *Abbott*.

24. This is my blood. A sign or emblem of my blood. This formula occurs again from the forms of the passover feast. *The blood is the life* (Lev. 17: 14). He laid down his life. It pleased the Lord to bruise him (Isa. 53). — *Jacobus*. Up to this time the blood of bulls and of goats had represented Christ's blood: henceforth the simple wine of this memorial supper should represent it (Heb. 9: 13, 14). — *Abbott*. The blood of the sacrifice was the seal and assurance of the old covenant: so wine is the seal of the new covenant, under which there is no shedding of blood. — *Cambridge Bible*. New testament; or, covenant. The word "new" is omitted in the most ancient MSS. Covenant is the preferable sense here, as in most passages where the word occurs in the New Testament: the new covenant is contrasted with "the covenant which God made with our fathers" (Acts 3: 25). It need hardly be remarked that the title of the New Testament is derived from this passage. — *Cambridge Bible*. The new covenant was, that God would renew and save all who believed in Jesus. — *P*. In ancient times the ratification of important covenants was made by a sacrificial feast. The sacrifice was an appeal to God, and declared the entire sincerity and surrender of the offerer; and the *feast* was the expression of mutual confidence and happy friendship. — *Godwin*. Gradually and progressively he had prepared the minds of his disciples to realize the idea of his death as a sacrifice. He now gathers up all previous announcements in the institution of this sacrament. — *Cambridge Bible*. For many; i.e., to save many. Multitudes, not merely a few, are to be saved by Christ. — *Many*, in a sense for *all*, in that all may accept, and become partakers of the new covenant (Rev. 22: 17). — *Abbott*. This blood of the New Testament was for every soul that comes to him, be they never so many; like the widow's oil, in the Book of the Kings, there is enough and enough again, as long as any vessel is brought to receive it. — *Lightfoot*. When we partake of the cup we show forth his death, confessing that it was the ransom for us. While the "bread" points more to Christ's life in us, and the wine Christ's death for us, the two are inseparable; for the bread was broken to signify his death also, and the wine is drunk to signify our partaking of his life also. The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a feast of the living union of believers with a crucified yet living Saviour and with each other. It signifies and seals these truths. The central fact is the atoning death of Christ, which we commemorate; but the present blessing is the assurance conveyed by visible signs, that this Saviour is ours, and nourishes us with his life unto life eternal. — *Riddle*.

25. I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine. He is done with earthly rites, and at this sad moment points them to a future re-union at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The ordinance now receives its prophetic meaning (comp. 1 Cor. 11: 26, "till he come"), directing believers to the perfect vision and fruition of that time, through the foretaste which this sacrament is designed to give. — *Schaff*. Drink it new. In the kingdom of God, completed and perfected, he would be with them once again, and then Master and dis-

26. ¶ ¹ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27. ² And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, ³ I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

And when they had sung a 26 hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives.

And Jesus saith unto them, 27 All ye shall be offended: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall

¹ Matt. 26: 30. ² Matt. 26: 31. ³ Zech. 13: 7.

ciples would be alike sharers in that joy in the Holy Ghost, of which wine — new wine — was the appropriate symbol. — *Plumptre*. The new heavens and the new earth shall have a new memorial of God's love in Christ. Observe, (1) that the Lord's Supper is a prophecy as well as a parable; has a future as well as a commemorative aspect; looks back to the passover, forward to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; (2) that, as the Lord's Supper superseded the passover, so the heavenly supper will supersede the earthly memorial. — *Abbott*. In the kingdom of God. Not to be weakened into "in the Christian dispensation." It points to the victory of the Church, not to its conflicts; and the continued celebration of the Lord's Supper is an expression of assured victory on the part of his militant Church. — *Schaff*. After the institution of the Lord's Supper, there occurred that wonderfully touching interview with the eleven disciples, recorded by John (from chap. 13: 31 to 17: 26). It is well to read it at this point. The importance attached to the closing events is shown by the fact that the Evangelists devote one-sixth of all their narratives to the account of these twenty-four hours. — *Abbott*.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. It is a reminder of the leading truths of the gospel. (1) Salvation, like this bread, is the gift of God's love. (2) We are reminded of the life of Christ, — all he was and did and said. (3) We are reminded, as by the passover, of the grievous bondage of sin from which Christ redeems us. (4) It holds up the atonement, the body of Christ broken, his blood shed, for us. (5) In Christ alone is forgiveness and salvation from sin, the first need of the soul. (6) Christ is the food of the soul. (7) We must partake by faith, or it will be of no avail. (8) We are taught to distribute to one another the spiritual blessings God gives us. (9) By this meal our daily bread is sanctified. (10) The most intimate communion with God in Christ. (11) Communion with one another. (12) It is a feast of joy. "Nothing less than the actual joy of heaven is above it." (13) It is a prophecy of Christ's second coming, of the perfect triumph of his kingdom. (14) It is holding up before the world of the cross of Christ. Not a selfish gathering of a few saints, but a proclamation of the Saviour for all. — *P*.

II. WAS IT A PERMANENT ORDINANCE? "Do this in remembrance of me," points to a permanent institution. The command is therefore binding on all who believe in Christ; and disobedience to it is sin, for the unbelief that keeps men away is one of the worst of sins. — *Prof. Riddle*. The subsequent practice of the apostles (Acts 2: 42, 46; 20: 7), and still more the fact that directions for the Lord's Supper were made a matter of special revelation to Paul (1 Cor. 11: 23), seem to make it clear that Christ intended the ordinance for a perpetual one, and that his apostles so understood it. — *Abbott*.

III. METHOD OF OBSERVANCE. Not in the exact outward form in which Christ kept it. "For the original supper was taken in a private house, an upper chamber, at night, around a table, reclining, women excluded, only the ordained apostles admitted. None of these conditions are maintained to-day by any Christian sect." But it must be kept with the same spirit and purpose now as then.

26. And when they had sung an hymn. It was customary to commence the passover service with singing or chanting Psalms 113 and 114, and to conclude the services with the 115th to the 118th from the Scripture, in which not only the events of the exodus are commemorated, but there is a direct reference to the sorrows of the Messiah, and his resurrection from the dead. — *Jacobus*. They went out into the Mount of Olives. Luke adds, "as he was wont;" i.e., during this passion week (compare John 8: 1). This may have been for solitude simply, or also in part for safety. He went directly to the Garden of Gethsemane. — *Abbott*.

II. The Prophecy of Peter's Denial. — Vers. 27-31. All four Evangelists record Peter's denial. The prophecy appears to have been uttered twice: once before supper, of which Luke and John give a report; once after supper, on the way to Gethsemane, of which Matthew and Mark give a report. — *Abbott*.

27. All ye shall be offended. Caused to stumble; tempted to fall into sin. Not offended at him, in the modern sense; i.e., displeased and alienated in affection. — *Alexander*. You will be staggered in your faith on account of my betrayal. It shall prove an occasion of stumbling to you, that I, your Leader, shall seem to fall under the

28. But ¹ after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29. ² But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

be scattered abroad. How-28
beit, after I am raised up, I
will go before you into Galilee.
But Peter said unto him, 29
Although all shall be offended,
yet will not I. And Jesus 30
saith unto him, Verily I say
unto thee, that thou to-day,
even this night, before the
cock crow twice, shalt deny
me thrice. But he spake ex- 31
ceeding vehemently, if I must
die with thee, I will not deny
thee. And in like manner
also said they all.

¹ Mark 16: 7. ² Matt. 26: 33, 34. Luke 22: 33, 34. John 13: 37, 38.

power of the wicked. — *Jacobus*. For it is written. The words are taken from Zech. 13: 7. I will smite the shepherd. The Lord Jesus, — the shepherd of his people. Not merely, as Bengel, "God is said to smite Jesus, since he delivered him to be smitten." Throughout the New Testament Christ is represented as offered up by his own Father, or by himself, though it is also explicitly declared that he was slain by wicked men (John 3: 16. Rom. 5: 8. Heb. 7: 27; 9: 14, 28. Compare John 18: 11, Acts 2: 23). — *Abbott*. The sheep shall be scattered. The apostles; also all who were then followers of Jesus. A peculiarly appropriate comparison, on account of the timidity and helplessness, the want of clear views and a strong will, displayed by the apostles at the death of Christ. — *Alexander*. This occurred both in the case of the disciples, and of the Jews, after they had rejected the smitten Shepherd. — *Schaff*.

28. After that I am risen. This was to give them the strongest assurance of his actual rising from the dead. Here was a positive appointment made for a meeting after his burial and rising again. It was fulfilled (see Mark 16: 7. Matt. 28: 16). Galilee was the spot of his principal ministrations. — *Jacobus*. These words appear to have fallen at the time unheeded on the ears of the disciples, and to have been rapidly forgotten. No expectation of a resurrection is traceable in their after-conduct. — *Plumptre*. I will go before you. The figure of a shepherd is continued. — *Schaff*.

29. But Peter said. Instead of laying hold of the comforting part of the promise, Peter reverts to the first part, "all ye shall be offended." All shall be offended. The utterance of affection, yet of self-confidence and arrogance, since "all" refers to the other disciples. — *Schaff*. Peter, with characteristic forwardness and self-will, undertakes to make his own case an exception to the general defection, little imagining in what sense it would prove to be so. This is one of the most unfavorable specimens on record of the dark or weak side of this great apostle's character. This invidious self-preference is thought by some to be pointedly yet gently hinted at in that searching question of our Lord to Peter at the Sea of Galilee (John 21: 15), "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *more than these?*" i.e., more than any of his brethren, the chief of whom were present upon that occasion (John 21: 2), and not one of whom had been allowed to sink so low as to deny his Master in the presence of his enemies, except the very one, who, in his blindness and self-confidence, gratuitously volunteered the rash engagement in the verse before us. — *Alexander*. Peter believed in his own fidelity more than in the word of Jesus. — *Godet*. There is nothing more easy than for a man to be courageous in a time of safety, and to defy those dangers which he neither feels nor sees. But when the evil hour cometh, when our enemy appears armed in the lists ready to encounter us, then to call up our spirits and to grapple resolutely with dangers and death, it is the praise and proof of a true Christian valor. — *Bishop Hall*.

30. Before the cock crow twice; i.e., before three o'clock in the morning. Three crowings of the cock were distinguished, — the first between midnight and one o'clock, the second about three, the third between five and six. The mention of those two crowings, the first of which should have already been a warning to Peter, perhaps makes the gravity of his sin the more conspicuous. — *Godet*. Deny me. Profess not to know me, or to belong to me as a disciple.

31. He spake the more vehemently. The Greek tense implies frequent and continuous speaking. The Greek adverb conveys the idea of *superfluous* iteration. — *Plumptre*. If I should (must) die with thee. This was the strongest form in which Peter could put his expression of confidence. It was a proverbial expression. — *Jacobus*. There is a right Christian confidence, but it rests on the presence and power of the Lord (Phil. 4: 13. 2 Tim. 1: 12); and upon a consciousness of personal weakness (2 Cor. 12: 9, 10). Peter's rested on his own courage and fidelity, and failed him in the hour of trial. — *Abbott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Monday Club Sermons for 1878, p. 406. Edersheim's *Temple and its Services*: "The Paschal Lamb and the Lord's Supper." *Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence*: Cyprian's Sermon on the Lord's Supper. *Sermons* by Emmons, Maclaren, Punshon, McClintock.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The ordinances of the gospel. Mr. Ruskin says that in nature the most common shapes and forms are the most beautiful, and that you can almost tell what lines or curves are the most beautiful by finding out those which God has created in the greatest abundance. So Christ has taken for the ordinances of his kingdom some of the simplest and commonest things, — water, bread, and grape-juice. Every one can understand them, and yet they are as full of meaning and instruction as they are simple and abundant.

II. *The Palace Beautiful*, of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, is the most perfect picture of the Church and its ordinances in all literature. The lions in the way before coming; the porter, Watchful, welcoming the pilgrim at the door; the examination by the gentle maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity, with their discourse at the supper; the sleeping in the Chamber of Peace; the study of the records of the place; the vision of the Delectable Mountains, and the putting-on the armor for future warfare, — make altogether a fitting picture of the "house built by the Lord of the hill, for the relief and security of pilgrims."

PRACTICAL.

1. As the passover celebrates the birthday of the Jewish nation, so does the Lord's Supper the birthday of each Christian soul.

2. Vers. 22, 23. The simplest and most common things of daily life remind us of Christ.

3. The two greatest needs of the soul — forgiveness of sins, and daily supplies for the soul's new life — are furnished by Jesus Christ.

4. The Lord's Supper, coming down to us through the ages, is irrefragable proof of the life and death of Christ.

5. Christ could give thanks, even in view of his own death.

6. Ver. 25. There is promise and hope, even in the symbols that remind of Christ's death.

7. Ver. 28. To Christ the future life was a living reality.

8. Ver. 29. Self-confidence is a sign of self-ignorance.

9. Those who boast themselves over others are often the first to fall.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In teaching this lesson, the chief emphasis must be laid upon the first SUBJECT, THE LORD'S SUPPER A MEMORIAL OF CHRIST. There is abundant instruction in this alone. Seek to draw out its full meaning, and the duty of our doing this in remembrance of Christ. The *self-confidence* of Peter may be used as a warning against over self-confidence, and a persuasion to careful self-examination.

LESSON IV. — OCTOBER 22.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. — MARK 14:32-42.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* — Isa. 53:4.

TIME. — Thursday evening, about midnight, April 6-7, A. D. 30. Immediately following the institution of the Lord's Supper.

PLACE. — Gethsemane, a garden on the western slope of Mount Olivet.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (17th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (fifth); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (34th).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 26:36-46. Luke 22:39-46. The 32d verse is also found in John 18:1.

32. ¹ And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

And they come unto a place ³² which was named Gethsemane; and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. And he taketh with ³³ him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled.

¹ Matt. 26: 36. Luke 22: 39. John 18: 1.

INTRODUCTION.

Peter's denial in the last lesson took place as Jesus and his disciples were going out from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, after the Last Supper. In their walk they reach the Garden of Gethsemane, the scene of this lesson.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Agony.** — Vers. 32-34. Let us come soberly now, as is truly becoming, to the study of one of the most pathetic and awful scenes of our Lord's life. — *C. S. Robinson.*

32. **They came.** He took all of the twelve excepting Judas, who was at this time otherwise employed. — *M. Henry.* It was immediately after the Last Supper, as they went from Jerusalem out to the Mount of Olives. It was near midnight, but the full moon lighted them on the way. — *Hanna.* **Gethsemane.** Gethsemane means "oil-press." It



GETHSEMANE.

was probably an enclosed olive vineyard, containing a press and garden-tower, perhaps a dwelling-house. It was at the western foot of the Mount of Olives, beyond the Kedron ("black brook"), so called from its dark waters, which were still more darkened by the blood from the foot of the altar in the temple. The spot now pointed out as Gethsemane lies on the right of the path to the Mount of Olives. The wall has been restored. Eight olive-trees remain, all of them very old, but scarcely of the time of our Lord, since Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, had all the trees of the district cut down. — *Schaff.* Con-

cerning the location of the garden, it is worth while to state that within the city of Jerusalem no gardens were allowed, "except a few gardens of roses, which had been there from the time of the prophets;" but that "there were many gardens about the foot of the Mount of Olives;" at least, so says the Talmud. — *Prof. I. Hall in Sunday-school Times.* An olive-garden was a customary resort of Jesus, and more than likely belonged to some of his friends. It was almost on this same spot that Abraham's faith was tried, as to the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22: 5), and he uttered almost the same words. — *P.* The perfect fidelity of Jesus to the law is seen in his not going over the Mount of Olives to Bethany. It was necessary for every one to spend that night in Jerusalem. — *Lange.* Sit ye here. He speaks to the eight who were to remain (see next verse). These eight would form, as it were, a watch against premature surprise. — *Schaff.* And these eight were not yet fitted to enter into the holy of holies of Jesus' experience with the other three. — *P.* While I shall pray. The great crisis was at hand; and it was casting its dark shadow before on the spirit of our Lord. He felt that he must get into comparative retirement, in order that he might, without distraction, grapple with the appalling difficulties of the trial, and open up his heart, in the time of extremity, to his Father. — *Morison.*

33. **And he taketh with him Peter and James and John.** The *elite* of his elect, who had been witnesses of the counterpart scene, the transfiguration (chap. 9: 2). They

34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

And he saith unto them, My³⁴ soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye

were admitted by their own brethren to be a representative triumvirate. For, even among those who are good and true, some are better fitted than others for posts of eminence, and for intimacy of intercourse. — *Morison*. The infinite sadness of that hour leads the Master to crave for sympathy from the three who were, most of all, his brothers. The nearness and sympathy of friends were precious, even when personal solitude was felt to be a necessity. — *Plumptre*. In great trials we love solitude, but to have friends near. — *Bengel*. The eight were probably left near the entrance of the garden for an outer watch: the three entered farther within, as an inner guard (ver. 37), as well as for sympathy; and they were told to be praying while he prayed (Luke 22:40). *Began*, etc. As if all his former sorrows were as nothing in comparison of this fullness. — *J. Ford*. His former afflictions were like the scattered drops of rain, but this was the deluge. — *Dr. Bates*. *Sore amazed*. A surprise and horror at the unfolding before him of the infinite burden of sin and sorrow which rested upon the world. He sees its greatness, and the awful difficulty of its removal, as the burden presses upon his soul. — *P*. *Very heavy*. The Greek word conveys the impression of the deepest sorrow; it is used of "maddening grief." — *A. Carr*. Sorrow is here represented as a heavy burden, so we say "a crushing sorrow." — *P*. The crucifixion of his body on the cross was nothing near so painful to him as the crucifixion of his mind in the garden. — *J. Scott*.

34. My soul. This is important as the one passage in which Jesus ascribes to himself a human soul. — *A. Carr*. *Exceeding sorrowful*. Buttmann suggests that the root idea is that of being "away from home." Truly in respect to his human nature our Lord was far from home, far from his native skies; and the word may be taken to describe the awfulness of his isolation, unsupported by a particle of human sympathy, — a troubled, restless state, accompanied by the keenest mental distress. — *Maclear*. *Unto death*. Not a mere rhetorical addition. The weight of woe was literally crushing out the Saviour's life. — *Morison*. The Greek words intimate that he was surrounded with sorrow on every side, breaking in upon him with such violence as was ready to separate his soul from his body. — *Wesley*. No servant of Christ can fear his death so painfully, or feel himself so forsaken and miserable whilst actually undergoing it, as his Master did before him. — *Dr. Arnold*.

THE REASONS FOR CHRIST'S GREAT AGONY. — Why was Christ so sorrowful, when many a martyr has gone triumphantly to his cross; and to many a hero death has been "welcome as the sight of sky and stars to prisoned men"? It was "something far deadlier than death" that weighed upon his soul. He bore his trial and reproaches and crucifixion more bravely than any hero. What bitter portion was in his Gethsemane cup? — *P*. So far from deeming any excuse necessary, in no other incident do I so much admire his compassion and his grandeur of soul. For, had he not shared my feelings, he had been less my benefactor. — *St. Ambrose*. *Some hints of the elements in Christ's agony are given, or may be reverently surmised*. (1) Jesus was in the prime of manhood; life was just opening before him; his soul was eager for work, and conscious of rare capability to perform it; his death was the end of all human hope of achievement. (2) Into this one hour were crowded by prevision the combined horrors of the passion, its cruelty, its shame, its physical torment, its spiritual tortures. (3) To his own anguish was added that of others vicariously borne; his mother's grief, his disciples' dejection and dispersion, the doom of his country (Luke 19:41-44), which he had vainly striven to succor and save (Matt. 23:37), and the future perils, persecutions, conflicts, and defeats of his Church — all seen in instantaneous vision. (4) The torment of unloving hearts added torture, — the kiss of Judas, the denial of Peter, the desertion by all the disciples save one, the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," coming from those for whom he died, and all this a prophecy of future betrayals, denials, crucifixions. (5) The sense that all was voluntarily borne, might have been easily escaped, might still be escaped. He laid down his own life; no man took it from him (ver. 53. John 10:18). Was he not throwing away a life which duty as well as instinct demanded he should preserve? (6) The Tempter added subtle suggestions of evil, hinted at (John 14:30) but unreported. — *Abbott*. We may believe that he, who at the first temptation had left the Saviour "for a season" (Luke 4:13), had now returned, and whereas before he had brought "to bear against the Lord all things pleasant and flattering, if so he might by aid of these entice or seduce him from his obedience, so now he thought with other engines to overcome his constancy, and tried him with all painful things, hoping to terrify, if it might be, from his allegiance to the truth, him whom manifestly he could not allure." — *Trench's Studies*. (7) He knew that he must die, as he had lived, without sin; but if the extremity of suffering should so far prevail as to provoke him into impatience, or murmuring, or into a desire for revenge, this would be sin; and if he sinned all would be lost, for there was no other Saviour. In such considerations may probably be found the remote source of the agonies and fears which deepened the

35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36. And he said, ¹Abba, Father, ²all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: ³nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

here, and watch. And he ³⁵ went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, Abba, ³⁶ Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I

¹ Rom. 8: 15. Gal. 4: 6. ² Heb. 5: 7. ³ John 5: 30; 6: 38.

gloom of that dreadful night. — *Meyer*. (8) There was an element in the conflict which we can never fully appreciate. — *Abbott*. Death as the punishment of *sin* bore a dark and dreadful meaning, — inconceivable by any of us, whose inner will is tainted by the love of sin. — *Alford*. It was the sense, too, of how virulent, how frightful, must have been the force of evil in the universe of God, which could render necessary so infinite a sacrifice. — *Farrar*. (9) Christ stood under the imputation of all our sins; and although he was personally innocent, yet as our Lord was pleased to be our representative in bearing our sins, and to stand in our stead, so he put on the same sorrow, the same shame, the same trembling under the apprehension of the wrath of his Father, that we must have done. And, as an imputed sin drew with it the obligation to punishment, so it did by necessary consequences raise all those storms and compassions in the soul of Christ, as it would have done in the person of a sinner, sin only excepted. — *S. S. Times*. Tarry ye here and watch. He had wished his chosen three to be near him in his woe; and yet, as it advanced, he felt that he must retire even from them, and be alone with himself and his Father. "Of the people" none could be "with him" in the agony, — none on the altar. Still he wished that his chosen ones should not be at a great distance; and hence he said, *Remain here*. He desired also to be the object of their active sympathy; and hence he said, *And watch*. — *Morison*.

II. His Prayer. — Vers. 35, 36. 35. Went forward. Luke says he was withdrawn (22: 41). There is in this term the idea of some violence to which he is subject. He is *dragged* from the disciples by anguish. — *Godet*. A little. About a stone's-cast (Luke). The distance would not exceed forty or fifty yards, if so much: the disciples might therefore catch the leading words of Christ's prayer before drowsiness overpowered them. This separation from his disciples was because he would be alone. — *Abbott*. Fell on the ground. Luke, *kneeled down*; i.e., as in the East, with the head bowed forward to the ground. The natural position of agonizing prayer; because in that position no thought whatever need be given to the body, but mind and will be wholly concentrated on the object of prayer. — *P*. When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but the corn that lies low at thy feet. — *Philip Henry*. Prayed that, if it were possible. If it were possible to save men, and carry out the divine work of redeeming them, and bringing in the kingdom of God, in some other way than by his suffering and death. Might not God find some easier way? — *P*. The hour might pass from him. Certainly not the mere present feebleness and prostration of the bodily frame; not any mere section of his sufferings, — but the whole; the betrayal, the trial, the mocking, the scourging, the cross, and all besides which our thoughts cannot reach. Of this all, his soul, in humble subjection to the higher will which was absolutely united and harmonious with the will of the Father, prays that, if it be possible, it may pass from him. — *Alford*.

36. Abba. The Chaldee form of the Hebrew word *ab*, signifying *father*. — *Schaff*. *Abba* thenceforth became a watchword, even with Gentile Christians, a word of vital union with the Son — *Cook*. All things are possible unto thee. For all things depend on God's will. Here the only question is, whether the will of God — in other words, whether absolute righteousness — would require and exact the atonement. — *Cook*. This cup. It was customary among the ancients to assign to each guest at a feast a particular cup, as well as a dish; and, by the kind and quantity of the liquor contained in it, the respect of the entertained was expressed. Hence the word "cup" came, in general, to signify a portion assigned, whether of pleasure or sorrow. — *Doddridge*. Cup refers to the same suffering as "this hour," above. Not what I will. In his *human soul* he would be freed from the dreadful things before him; but this human will was overruled by the *inner and divine purpose*, — the will at unity with the Father's will. — *Alford*. Implying that *in itself* it was so purely revolting, that only its being the Father's will would induce him to taste it, but that *in that view* of it he was perfectly prepared to drink it up. — *J. F. and B*. The prayer does not imply the least feeling of revolt; for Jesus is ready to accept the Father's answer, whatever it may be. — *Godet*. But what thou wilt. This is an example of perfect faith, — the faith by which alone answers to prayer can be obtained. He that insists on his own will, when it is contrary to the will of God, fails in faith; for faith always trusts to God for the kind of answer, and the time of answer, as well as the fact of an answer. It is *unbelief*

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. ¹The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

will, but what thou wilt. And 37 he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch and pray, that ye 38 enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the

¹ Rom. 7:23. Gal. 5:17.

which prays, "Not thy will, but mine, be done." THE ANSWER. Was Christ's prayer answered? The Epistle to the Hebrews (5:7) says it was. (1) An angel came and strengthened him (Luke 22:43). There are two ways of answering a prayer for the removal of a burden. In one, the burden is taken away, and we remain the same: in the other, we are made so strong that the burden is no longer a burden to us; as what would crush a child, is but sport to a man. This latter is by far the best way of receiving an answer. (2) "He was delivered from that which he feared, which was, lest by impatience and distrust, he should offend and disable himself to go on with his undertaking." — *M. Henry*. (3) He was brought into the perfect peace and calmness of a submissive will, so that every desire and feeling and choice was in harmony with his Father. This is shown by the variation in the prayer the second and third time he prayed. (4) He was enabled to go on with his work of redemption, to save millions of immortal souls, to glorify God and magnify his love (see Phil. 2:7-10). The cross was changed to a crown, Gethsemane into Paradise, death into immortal glory. He had that which in his inmost soul he desired when he prayed. — *P.*

III. The Weary Watchers. — Vers. 37-42. 37. He cometh unto the disciples. Perhaps to both the groups, first of the three and then of the eight. All were alike sleeping. — *Ellicott*. Findeth them sleeping. Sleeping for sorrow, says Luke. It was now near the dawning of the day, and their eyes had not closed in sleep for four and twenty hours. — *Plumptre*. It is frequently supposed that this was proof of wonderful stupidity, and indifference to their Lord's sufferings. The truth is, however, that it was just the reverse: it was proof of their great attachment, and their deep sympathy in his sorrows. Their grief was so great that they naturally fell asleep. Multitudes of facts might be brought to show that this is in accordance with the regular effects of grief. — *Barnes*. There is another symptom of grief, which is not often noticed, and that is profound sleep. I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals, we are told by Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. — *Dr. Rush's Diseases of the Mind*, p. 319. Unto Peter. He had boasted of his readiness to do great things. He could not so much as rouse himself to watch for one hour. — *Ellicott*. Peter is no doubt singled out, partly because he was the leader of the three, and partly because he had singled himself out but a little before. — *Morison*. One hour. The last word may be fairly taken as partly measuring the time that had passed since their Master had left them. — *Ellicott*. It is almost the only personal request he is ever recorded to have made. It was but "a cup of cold water" that he craved. But it was denied him! Very Man, he leaned upon the men he loved, and they failed him! He trod the winepress alone; and of the people, there was none with him (Isa. 63:3). — *Maclear*. Be sure it is something more than surface-feeling — something more than impulse: it is good, honest, sober, considerate, patient principle, stayed up by prayer, that alone can remain awake, and outwatch the stars, and wait through the darkness, and conquer temptation, and do it all for the honor of the suffering and bleeding Master. — *F. D. Huntington*.

38. Watch . . . and pray. They needed always to be on their guard, and just now a special danger was impending for them. This danger was a spiritual one, though occasioned by the earthly one; hence the purpose of both watching and praying. — *Riddle*. The sentinel, picketed to watch the enemy, does his duty by giving the alarm if the enemy approaches, not by advancing single-handed to the conflict. So the duty of a Christian, watchfully discerning the approach of temptation, is to convey the case to God: it is foolhardiness to adventure into the combat unsent and unprovided for. — *William Ives Buddington*. Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption. — *Jay*. Lest ye enter into temptation. Entering into temptation is another and a very different thing from being assailed by temptation. — *J. C. Butler*. He that enters of his own accord into temptation is already more than half overcome by it. — *P.* Our Lord does not direct them to pray to God that no temptation might befall them, but that they might not be overcome by the temptations in which they must be involved, and to pray for extraordinary spiritual assistance under them. — *Mimpriss*. The spirit is ready. Better, eager, or willing, as in the New Version. The reference is unmistakably to Peter's eager declara-

39. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer him.

41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough,¹ the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

flesh is weak. And again he 39 went away, and prayed, saying the same words. And 40 again he came, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they wist not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, 41 and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of

¹ John 13: 1.

tion that he was ready to suffer imprisonment and death with Christ (Luke 22: 33). Thus Christ looks mercifully upon their strong desire, and so pardons their weak performance.

— *Abbott*. *Flesh is weak*. There is ever a hint in this contrast of the Spirit renewed by the Divine Spirit, and of the flesh as the symbol of the sinful life. See Rom. 8: 1. — *P*. And yet, true, as well as gracious, though his apology was, *the spirit was nevertheless to be somewhat blamed*. If it had been sympathetic to the quick, it would have roused the *flesh*.

— *Morison*. Our Lord himself illustrates this saying. At that moment he was giving as high and pre-eminent example of its truth as the disciples were affording a low and ignoble one: he, in the willingness of the spirit, yielding himself to the Father's will to suffer and die, but weighed down by the weakness of the flesh; they having professed, and really having, a willing spirit to suffer with him, but, even in the one hour's watching, overcome by the burden of drowsiness. — *Alford*. Observe in this contrast the lesson for us. In both Christ and the disciples, there is a willing spirit, in both weakness of the flesh. But in Christ the spirit conquers the flesh, and he is victor; in the disciples the flesh conquers the spirit and they are defeated. — *Abbott*.

39. And again he went away, . . . prayed. "More earnestly," says Luke, who adds the account of the bloody sweat (Luke 22: 44). His agony returned on him. Perhaps the very lethargy of his disciples might call up before his view the whole appalling succession of woes that were about to overtake him. — *Morison*. Now, however, not that the cup might pass from him, but that he might be able to fulfil the divine will in completing his sacrifice (Matt. 26: 42). The continuance of the trial he accepts as God's answer to the petition, "Let this cup pass from me:" he now asks only, "Thy will be done" (Matt. 26). The wish to be relieved from the passion is subdued: the will to fulfil the Father's will is supreme. — *Abbott*. Same words. The fact is suggestive, as indicating that there is a repetition in prayer which indicates not formalism, but intensity of feeling. Lower forms of sorrow may, as it were, play with grief and vary the forms of its expression, but the deepest and sharpest agony is content to fall back upon the iteration of the self-same words. — *Plumptre*.

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again. The motive of this return we may reverently believe to have been, as before, the craving for human sympathy in that hour of awful agony. — *Plumptre*. For. The *for* introduces, not a reason, but an illustration, of their sleepiness. It would appear that they had not deliberately surrendered themselves to sleep. They did not lie down, for instance. They sat, and, to a certain extent, sought to keep themselves awake. But ever and anon, and prevailing, their eyelids closed. — *Morison*. Neither wist they, etc. They were too confused at their being again found sleeping, during this hour of their Master's distress, to make any reply. They had no excuse to offer, and remained silent under his reproof. — *Owen*. St. Peter remembered, doubtless, what had been his feelings on the Holy Mount (see chap. 9: 6), and how he then spake foolishly; now, grown wiser, he will remain silent.

41. The third time. But now with a deeper calm, and a brighter serenity of triumphant confidence. He had found all that he needed. Before that hour was over he was prepared for the worst that Satan or man could do. — *Farrar*. Sleep on . . . take your rest. He did not feel the same need of the intense active sympathy of his disciples which in the crisis of his agony he had so fervently desired. He saw, too, that they were still overpowered with drowsiness, notwithstanding the persevering efforts they were making to wake up. He hence spoke to them soothingly; and, as Cardinal Cajetan says, "indulgently," that they might get the refreshment they so much desired. — *Morison*. It is enough. That is, enough of your watching with me, or seeming to watch with me. Even could you watch, it would no longer avail. — *Schaff*. Is betrayed. It is not improbable that his watchful eye at that moment caught sight of Judas and his accomplices, as they issued from one of the eastern gates, or turned around the northern or southern corner of the walls, in order to descend into the valley. — *Professor Hackett*.

42. ¹ Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

¹ Matt. 26: 46. John 18: 1, 2.

42. Rise up. Rouse yourselves up. There was no longer time for repose. Let us go. That we may confront the traitor and his band. How sublimely does the heroism of our Lord reveal itself! He that betrayeth. Instead of naming Judas, the Lord described him, and, in the description, verified his own former predictions regarding himself. — *Morison*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Archbishop Thompson's essay on "The Death of Christ," in *Aids to Faith*, p. 360. Hanna's *Life of Christ*, chap. 18; Farrar, chap. 57; Geikie, chap. 60. Farrar's *Silence and Voices of God*, on "Prayer the Antidote to Sorrow." Bertram's *Homiletic Cyclopadia*, 5087 and 3616. H. W. Beecher's *Sermons*, series 7, "Physical Hinderances to Spiritual Life." Foster's *Cyclopadia*, No. 5974-5984.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Christ's agony. A friend once called the attention of Napoleon to the blanched face of an officer as he was marching into battle, as showing that he was a coward. Napoleon replied that that man was the bravest officer in his army; for he saw clearly, and felt keenly his danger, and yet went forward into the thickest of the battle.

II. Not as I will, but as thou wilt. An ignorant man, just become a Christian, knew not how to pray. But he took the letters of the alphabet, and laid them before the Lord, saying, "Lord, I know not what I need or ought to pray for: take thou these letters, and spell out the prayer I ought to offer, and answer that." No man knows enough to insist on his own wishes, rather than to trust all to the wisdom and love of God.

III. Watch. Learn from the pilot on board the ship, from the keeper of the lighthouse, from the sentinels of the army, — on whose watchfulness depend the lives of many people, — how we ought to watch against every evil, every secret approach of sin.

IV. The tract, *Parley the Porter*, will furnish a capital illustration of watching, for the younger scholars.

PRACTICAL.

1. Every life has its Gethsemanes of sorrow, and may have its victories.
2. It is a striking fact, that both the Old and New Testaments give one and the same receipt for bearing trouble, — prayer. — *Anon*.
3. Sorrow needs friends near, but its greatest burden must be borne alone.
4. Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness. — *Phillips Brooks*.
5. Christ prayed three times to teach perseverance in prayer.
6. The essence of faith in God is to say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."
7. There is no sin in shrinking from what is painful, save when the shrinking is so violent that it resists the clear will of our Father. — *Cummings*.
8. Ah! if you only knew the peace there is in an accepted sorrow. — *Mme. Guyon*.
9. Christ's prayer in the garden is a model (1) of earnestness; (2) of directness; (3) of faith; (4) of submission. — *Hurlbut*.
10. Ver. 37. Praying and watching must go together.
11. Satan always rocks the cradle when we sleep at our devotions.
12. It is a sad thing for the Church to be sleeping while Christ is suffering and praying.
13. Ver. 38. The best people find the least fault with their brethren, and are the most ready to find excuses for the failures of others.
14. We see by this how God sometimes answers the prayer of faith.
15. God always answers in kind or in kindness. — *Cecil*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

CHRIST'S AGONY, AND HIS VICTORY THROUGH THE PRAYER OF FAITH, is depicted in this strange scene in Gethsemane. (1) *His agony* (vers. 32-34): how intense; what were its elements; why he was amazed; how it was all for our sins. (2) *His prayer and its answer* (vers. 35, 36): what Christ prayed for; how it showed faith; what elements of true prayer are found in it; how it was answered; how our prayers are often best answered. (3) *The weary watchers* (vers. 32-42): what they should have done; what they did do; Christ's excuse for them; the close of the scene.

LESSON V. — OCTOBER 29.

JESUS BETRAYED AND TAKEN. — MARK 14: 43-54.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* — MARK 14: 41.**TIME.** — Between one and three o'clock Friday morning, April 7, A. D. 30. Immediately following the last lesson.**PLACE.** — The betrayal took place in the garden of Gethsemane (see last lesson). Christ was then taken to the palace of the high priest in Jerusalem.**RULERS.** — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea; Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee; Herod Philip, governor of other parts. Caiaphas, high priest of the Jews; Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, ex-high priest, and often acting in that capacity.**PARALLEL PASSAGES.** — Matt. 26: 47-58. Luke 22: 47-55. John 18: 2-18.

INTRODUCTION.

As our Lord is speaking the words at the close of the last lesson, Judas appears in the garden at the head of a band of Roman soldiers, and the scenes of to-day's lesson are enacted. Since the other Gospels are much more full in their account of the betrayal, they should all be consulted in studying the lesson, especially Matthew and John.

43. ¹ And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

And straightway, while he 43 yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

¹ Matt. 26: 47. Luke 22: 47. John 18: 3.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Betrayal. — Vers. 43-45. **43. Immediately.** After Jesus' return to his disciples from his third season of prayer. **Cometh Judas.** Between one and two o'clock Friday morning. The movements of Judas, after the Last Supper, we may readily picture to ourselves in their outline. Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrim, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfil his compact, and at once to make the arrest. It was not the intention to arrest Christ during the feast, lest there should be a popular tumult (Matt. 26: 5); but, now that an opportunity offered of seizing him secretly at dead of night, when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, his enemies could not hesitate. — *Andrews.* Judas knew the place, for it was a frequent resort of Jesus with his disciples (John 18: 2). Judas had been there oftentimes, a witness to the devotions of his Master, but never in devout sympathy, never to pray himself. No hallowed associations with that sacred spot deterred his treason for one moment. — *H. Cowles.* **Judas.** Son of Simon. He is called *Iscaariot*, probably because he belonged in Kerieth, a town in Southern Judea. If so, he was the only Judean among the disciples, all the others being Galileans. **One of the twelve.** The evangelists do not conceal the fact that the traitor was one of their own number. *Why was such a man chosen to be one of the twelve?* (1) There was needed among the disciples, as in the Church now, a man of just such talents as Judas possessed, — the talent for managing business affairs. (2) Though he probably followed Christ at first from mixed motives, as did the other disciples, he had the opportunity of becoming a good and useful man. (3) It doubtless was included in God's plans that there should be thus a standing argument for the truth and honesty of the gospel; for, if any wrong or trickery had been concealed, it would have been revealed by the traitor in self-defence. (4) It is a relief to modern churches to know that God can bless them, and the gospel can succeed, even though some bad men may creep into the fold. — *P.* **A great multitude.** This consisted, (1) of *the band* (John 18: 3, 12), or Roman cohort, which, consisting of 300 to 600 men, was quartered in the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple, and ever ready to put down any tumult or arrest any disturber. Probably so much of the band as could be spared was present. (2) There were *the captains of the temple* (Luke 22: 52), with their men, who guarded the temple and kept order. (3) Some of the *chief priests and elders* (Luke 22: 52). (4) And, finally, their servants, such as Malchus (John 18: 10), and others, who had been commis-

44. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

Now he that betrayed him had 44 given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away safely. And when he 45 was come, straightway he came to him, and saith,

sioned by the Jewish authorities. — *Clark*. (5) Besides these a crowd would naturally collect around such a procession. **Swords and staves.** The soldiers were armed with swords; the officers of the chief priests with staves or clubs. There flashed, also, the light of numerous lanterns and torches (John 18:3), though the paschal moon was at the full; for in the rocky ravine of the Kidron, there would fall great deep shadows from the declivity of the mountains and projecting rocks, and there were caverns and grottos in which a fugitive might retreat. — *Lange*. **From the chief priests.** Some of these chief priests were with them (Luke 22:52).

44. **He that betrayed; i.e., Judas. Gave them a token.** That is, had given them the sign previously. It was necessary, inasmuch as [the Roman soldiers did not personally know Christ, and] in the darkness he might be confounded, by the officers, with the disciples. The whole account indicates anxiety lest he should escape as he had done before (John 7:45, 46; 8:59; 10:39). — *Abbott*. **Shall kiss.** The kiss among the ancients was a sign of affectionate and cordial intimacy, and particularly a token of fidelity. — *Schaff*. It is said to have been the custom of our Lord Jesus, when he sent forth any of his disciples, to receive them with a kiss on their return. Therefore it was that the traitor, for a sign to them, betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and, coming before the rest, with a kiss joined him; as though he had said, "I am not connected with this armed multitude: I return only as is our habit, and kiss thee, saying, 'Hail, Master.'" — *Bonaventura*.

45. **Master.** Better, *Rabbi*, teacher, as in the Revised Version. This was hypocritical reverence. At the passover Judas used the same word, while the disciples simply said "Lord." — *Schaff*. **Kissed him.** The Greek word here is more forcible than the one signifying kiss in the previous verse, — kissed him with fervor, and frequently. The signal as arranged was to be simply a kiss. The signal actually given was kissing, accompanied with embraces; which was entirely in keeping with the excitement of Judas and the desire he felt that there should be no mistake as to the person intended. — *Meyer*.

WHAT WAS JUDAS' MOTIVE? (1) Anger at the public rebuke given him by Christ at the supper in the house of Simon the leper (Matt. 26:6-14). (2) Avarice, covetousness, the thirty pieces of silver (John 12:6). (3) A much larger covetousness, — an ambition to be the treasurer, not merely of a few poor disciples, but of a great and splendid temporal kingdom of the Messiah. He would hasten on the coming of that kingdom by compelling Jesus to defend himself. (4) Perhaps disappointment because Christ insisted on foretelling his death, instead of receiving his kingdom. He began to fear that there was to be no kingdom, after all. (5) Perhaps, also, Judas "abandoned what seemed to him a failing cause, and hoped by his treachery to gain a position of honor and influence in the Pharisaic party."

THE END OF JUDAS. (1) Judas, when he saw the results of his betrayal, "repented himself" (Matt. 27:3-10). He saw his sin in a new light, and "his conscience bounded into fury:" he loathed himself, he was crushed by his evil conscience. (2) He made ineffectual struggles to escape, by attempting to return the reward to the Pharisees; and, when they would not receive it, he cast it down at their feet, and left it (Matt. 27:5). But (a) restitution of the silver did not undo the wrong; (b) it was restored in a wrong spirit, — a desire for relief, rather than hatred of sin; (c) he confessed to the wrong party, or, rather, to those who should have been secondary, and who could not grant forgiveness; (d) "compunction is not conversion." (3) The money was used to buy a burial-field for poor strangers (Matt. 27:6-10). (4) Judas himself, in his despair, went out and hanged himself (Matt. 27:5), and in the act he fell down a precipice, and was dashed into pieces (Acts 1:18). "And he went to his own place" (Acts 1:25). "A guilty conscience must find either hell or pardon." (5) Judas' repentance may be compared to that of Esau (Gen. 27:32-38. Heb. 12:16, 17). It is contrasted with that of Peter. Judas proved his repentance to be false by immediately committing another sin, suicide. Peter proved his to be true, by serving the Lord faithfully ever after.

REMARKS. (1) Judas became bad under the best of influences. Good example and good training alone will not make all men good. (2) The hiding of our sins, even from ourselves, under plausible excuses will not take away the sin. (3) Wrong-doing is none the less wrong because God is able to use the results in furthering his kingdom. The sin lies in the motive, not in the results; and God can always find some other way than our sins for bringing his purposes to pass. (4) Note the wretched reward of evil-doing. "Even in

46. And they laid their hands on him, and took him.
 47. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Rabbi; and kissed him. And 46 they laid hands on him, and took him. But a certain one 47 of them that stood by drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and

this world the gains of sin are very small; even in *this* world the losses of sin are very great: but in the next world, there is *no* gain left to the sinner; the laughter is all past, the sorrow alone remains." Satan never *really* gives what he promises. — *P.*

II. **The Capture.** — Vers. 46-54. Mark omits the graphic picture of the capture, given in John 18: 4-9, where Jesus presents himself to the crowd, who fall backward to the ground under the influence of his superhuman majesty. Then he asks them to let his disciples go their way.

46. Laid hands upon him. This is an epitome of the following verses describing the capture. **And took him.** But only because Christ offers himself to be taken. He could have had twelve legions of angels to defend and rescue him, had he desired (Matt. 26: 53). It was to be emphatically set forth before the eyes of all, — Judas as well, — that no man had power to bind this Jesus, or to lead him away to death, unless *he himself should lay down his life.* — *Rudolph Besser, D.D.*

47. One of them. This was Peter (John 18: 10). **Drew a sword.** We learn from Luke 22: 33, that there were but two swords in the whole company of the twelve. One of these naturally was in Peter's possession, as being the foremost of the whole band. — *Plumptre.* The sword was probably a short sword or dirk worn in the belt. — *Carr.* The whole circumstance is singularly characteristic: the *word-bearer* for the rest of the apostles proves, when occasion requires, the *sword-bearer* also — not indeed in this altogether of a different temper from the others, but showing himself prompter and more forward in action than them all. — *Trench.* I surmise that the attack on the guard followed their sudden terror. All the disciples were eager to make it (Luke 22: 49), though Peter was the only one who carried the will into action. — *Abbott.* **And smote.** In Luke 22: 49, Peter first asks if they shall fight. He waits not for the answer, but impelled by the natural courage of his heart, and taking no heed of the odds against him, aims a blow at one, probably the foremost of the band, — the first that was daring to lay profane hands on the sacred person of his Lord. — *Trench.* The bringing of the sword was part of the misconception which Jesus had not cared further to remove at the supper; and, if Judas had pressed into the enclosure, they may have been entirely unaware as yet of the number of the captors. Future years would teach them that Christ's cause is served by dying, not by killing. The full reply of our Lord on this incident must be found by combining Matt. 26: 53, John 18: 10, 11. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools.* **A servant.** Rather, the servant, or rather, slave; St. John gives his name, Malchus (18: 10). This was "*a servant of the high priest's*," one therefore who, according to the proverb, "like master like man," may very probably have been especially forward in this bad work, — himself a Caiaphas of a meaner stamp. Peter was not likely to strike with any other but a right good will; and no doubt the blow was intended to cleave down the aggressor, though by God's good providence the stroke was turned aside, and grazing the head at which it was aimed, but still coming down with sheer descent, cut off the ear — the "*right ear*," as St. Luke and St. John tell us — of the assailant who thus hardly escaped with his life. — *Trench.* We are told by Luke (22: 51), that Jesus healed the servant's ear at once. Thus the last act of those hands before they were bound — hands ever wont to distribute blessings — was a work of mercy and of peace, in healing that slight wound, the only one ever inflicted for his sake. — *A. Tholuck.* And this, too, in favor of one who had been the most active among his enemies. — *Trench.* Peter was no swordsman, for he missed his blow. In any case, carnal weapons used in Christ's cause deprive his opponents of "ears;" i.e., of a willingness to listen to the truth. Christ's grace may restore this willingness, as it healed this ear. The double effect of Peter's rashness, damage to Malchus and danger to himself, were thus removed. — *Schaff.* This act of violence, indeed, not only compromised the safety of Peter, but even the Lord's cause. Jesus was all but hindered thereby from addressing Pilate in the words so important for his defence against the crime with which the Jews charged him (John 18: 36). — *Godet.* How common is the conduct, even in good men, to run before they are called, to be very forward to set themselves on work in the greatest matters, but to be backward and diffident when God commands! — *Wogan.* If a man be zealous for Christ, he must be zealous within the compass of his calling; and not be zealous first, and then look for a calling; but first look for a calling, and then be zealous. — *William Perkins.* Christ's reply to Peter's act, as given in Matt. 26: 52, 53, is full of instruction: "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." There is no possibility of advancing Christ's kingdom in such worldly ways, by force, by depending on the rich, or on state patronage.

48. 'And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me?

49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the ²scriptures must be fulfilled.

50. And ³they all forsook him, and fled.

51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him:

struck off his ear. And Jesus ⁴⁸
answered and said unto them,
Are ye come out, as against
a robber, with swords and
staves to seize me? I was ⁴⁹
daily with you in the temple
teaching, and ye took me not:
but *this is done* that the
scriptures might be fulfilled.
And they all left him, and fled. ⁵⁰
And a certain young man ⁵¹
followed with him, having a
linen cloth cast about him,
over *his* naked *body*: and

¹ Matt. 26: 55. Luke 22: 52. ² Ps. 22: 6. Isa. 53: 7, etc. ³ Ps. 88: 8.

And there is no need of such aid, either for Christ or his kingdom. God can always save them from worldly trouble if that were the best; for "thinkest thou I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me twelve legions of angels?"

48. Are ye come out as against a thief? The word is the same as that used in John 18: 40, of Barabbas, and points to the brigand chieftain of a lawless band, as distinct from the petty thief of towns or villages. — *Plumptre*. Judas had cautioned the guard to lead Jesus away securely (Mark 14: 44), and when they finally arrested him they bound him (John 18: 12). This indignity, it appears to me, probably called forth the remonstrance of this verse. Compare the language of Luke 22: 52, 53. — *Abbott*. Throughout his prolonged sufferings he complained of no other injury done to him than this; namely, that they came to apprehend him as a criminal. "Yes," they said among themselves, "this is the sure way to grieve him; as a thief, then, let us treat him." Hence, not satisfied with having first ranked him beneath Barabbas, a thief of the worst description, they made thieves his companions to Calvary, and between thieves they lifted him to the cross. So earnestly did they hope, that, by means of such a death as this, he would not fail to be regarded by all men as indeed a King, but a King of thieves. — *Segneri*.

49. Daily . . . in temple. The sitting in the temple implied that our Lord took the position of a teacher, more or less recognized as such, not that of one who was addressing the multitude without authority. — *Ellicott*. This utterance must remind them of many a fruitless plot which they had meditated, and many a word of rebuke which they had heard. — *Lange*. "Sat teaching" is the greatest possible contrast to thief and robber. — *Alford*. Took me not. The offence with which he was charged was one of teaching, not of robbery or violence: it was open, public, unconcealed, and the time to arrest him was the time of his teaching; he had neither hid himself, nor surrounded himself with his followers for self-protection; the indignity of this midnight arrest was, therefore, gratuitous. — *Abbott*. The scriptures must (might) be fulfilled. As, for instance, relative to Judas (Ps. 41: 9), relative to Christ being treated as a transgressor (Isa. 53: 12), relative to the desertion of the disciples (Zech. 13: 7). — *Mimpriss*. According to the counsel of God, for the salvation of a sinful world, as declared in the Scriptures, the Messiah must suffer: that suffering must be thus brought about. Our Lord's death could not be incidental or accidental. This declaration also contained consolation for his terrified disciples. — *Schaff*. We must not expect to find what is here referred to in any passage of Scripture in particular: suffice it to know that *all* the predictions relating to the sufferings of the Messiah find their necessary fulfilment in the historical events of our Lord's life, the arrest itself *not excluded*. — *Meyer*.

50. All forsook him. Though all had joined with Peter in his protestation. The forsaking is connected with the last word of our Lord. He says he submits: their courage fails them. Only after Christ died for men, could men die for Christ. — *Schaff*. And fled. Even the impetuous Peter, who had made so many promises; even the disciple whom Jesus loved. — *Maclear*. The disciples *forsook* or *left* their Lord, being, as their Master had predicted, stumbled or staggered in their faith (Mark 14: 27). They had never taken up the idea that it would be consistent with the ends contemplated in the mission of the Messiah that he should be ignominiously arrested. — *Morison*. This statement of the desertion of Jesus by "all the disciples" is one of the most remarkable instances of that honesty which led the evangelists to record facts, though to their own dishonor. — *Mimpriss*.

51. A certain young man. Some have conjectured he was the owner of the garden of Gethsemane; others, Lazarus, etc. It is far more probable that it was St. Mark himself, the son of Mary, the friend of St. Peter. The minuteness of the details given points to him as one well acquainted with the scene from personal knowledge, probably as an eyewitness. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. So Schaff, Ellicott, Godet, and others. Calvin is of opinion that this short narrative was introduced in order to show, in the most striking manner, the riotous and lawless nature of the scene, and to set forth more strongly the

52. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53. ¶ And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

they lay hold on him; but he 52 left the linen cloth, and fled naked.

And they led Jesus away to 53 the high priest: and there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter 54 had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest: and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire.

remarkable escape of the disciples from arrest. He was one who so loved our Lord that he went on following him when all the disciples forsook him and fled. — *Plumptre*. **Having a linen cloth.** He had probably been roused from sleep, or just preparing to retire to rest in a house somewhere in the valley of Kedron, and he had nothing to cover him except the *sindbn* or upper garment; but, in spite of this, he ventured, in his excitement, to press on amongst the crowd. — *Cambridge Bible*. The word *sindbn* primarily denoted a web of cloth, so it came to mean a *wrapper*, denoting properly a kind of cloak, like the Scotch plaid, and still in use in the East, but also an upper *gown*, such as was used for a *night-vest*; and this is doubtless the sense *here*. — *Bloomfield*. **Laid hold.** The disciples having escaped, they seized this young man.

52. **And he left the cloth.** In attempting to lay hold on him, they grasped only the loose folds of the linen cloth. Letting this remain with them, he fled away and escaped, either not being pursued, or taking advantage of his knowledge of the place, in the darkness of the night, to elude his pursuers. — *Ellicott*. In the East the natives can suddenly disengage themselves from their loose clothing. When two Hindoos are struggling, and one seizes the clothing of the other, often the latter will leave his clothes in the hands of his opponent, and *flee away naked*. — *Mimpriss*. **Naked.** This need not imply that he was absolutely naked. It may mean, like the Latin *nudus*, "with only the *under robe* on."

53. **Led Jesus away.** Jesus was now absolutely alone in the power of his enemies. At the command of the tribune his hands were tied behind his back; and, forming a close array around him, the Roman soldiers, followed and surrounded by the Jewish servants, led him once more through the night, over the Kedron, and up the steep city slope beyond it, to the palace of the high priest. — *Farrar*. He was brought into Jerusalem through that which was called the "sheep-gate," for that was the way into the town from the Mount of Olives; and it was so called because the sheep appointed for sacrifice were brought that way to the temple. Very fitly, therefore, is Christ led that way, who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. — *Henry*. **To the high priest.** We learn from John (18: 13-15) that Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas, and, after a brief delay here, to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. — *Andrews*. It was the duty of Annas to examine the sacrifices, whether they were *without blemish*: there was significance in it that Christ, the great Sacrifice, was presented to him, and sent away bound as approved and ready for the altar. — *Lightfoot*. The actual high priest at the time was Caiaphas; but this Annas had been high priest, and as such enjoyed the title by courtesy. Being also a man of great wealth and influence, and of active habits, he took upon him much of the business of that high office, as a sort of assessor to, or substitute for, Caiaphas, who was his son-in-law. Hence the evangelist describes them both as "high priests" (Luke 3: 2), as they were in fact. — *Kittos*. *Caiaphas*, we must remember, had already committed himself to the policy of condemnation (John 11: 50). He was appointed high priest by the Roman procurator about 27 A. D., held the office during the whole administration of Pilate, was deposed 36 or 37 A. D. Both Annas and Caiaphas were creatures of the Roman court; both belonged to the Saddusaic party; both, that is, were openly infidel concerning some of the fundamental truths of the Hebrew faith. — *Abbott*. **Were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.** It was against the rules of Jewish law to hold a session of the Sanhedrin or council for the trial of capital offences by night. Such an assembly on the night of the paschal supper must have been still more at variance with usage. The present gathering was therefore an informal one, — probably a packed meeting of those who were parties to the plot; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, and probably not a few others, like the young "ruler" of Luke 18: 18, not being summoned. — *Ellicott*.

54. **Peter followed afar off.** Matthew gives the true reason, — to see the end (Matt. 26: 58). It was, we may believe, more than a vague curiosity. There was something of sorrowful anxiety, of reverential sorrow: but there was no fervent devotion, only the fevered restlessness of uncertain expectation; and so all the natural instability of his character had free play, with nothing to control it. — *Ellicott*. To follow him afar off, is by

little and little to go back from him. Such following was no better than forsaking.—*Henry*. Had Peter gone openly to defend or comfort his Master, it would have been noble and courageous; but he went *secretly* to see the end.—*S. Tyng*. **Palace**; or, better, *into the court*, as Revised Version. Not the *palace*, but the open courtyard around which the palace was built. The court in the interior of a great house was used on public occasions for meetings of guests and for the reception of attendants.—*Cook*. John tells us (18:15, 16) that he himself, as an acquaintance of the high priests, went in, while Peter stood without. The former procured admission for the latter.—*Schaff*. St. John meant to let him out of the cold, and not to let him into temptation; but this courtesy in intention proved a mischief in event, and the occasion of his denying his Master.—*Thomas Fuller*. **Servants**. Officers, the whole body of guards, with the slaves of the high priests. **Warmed himself at the fire**. The fire was an open hearth, which lights and warms the hall at the same time. The designation is employed to explain the circumstance that Peter was recognized in the light of the fire.—*Lange*. The spring nights at Jerusalem, which is 2,610 feet above the level of the sea, are often cold.—*Cambridge Bible*. How could he sit by the fire warming himself, while his Master stood exposed to the insults of his enemies?—*Tyng*.



PLAN OF ORIENTAL HOUSE.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

O. Winslow's *Sympathy of Christ*, "Sympathy of Christ with True Shame." *Sermon* by F. A. G. Tholuck, on "The Betrayal of Jesus." Geikie's *Life of Christ*, chap. 60; Farrar's, chap. 57. Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel*, 505. *Prince of the House of David*, letter 29. Eggleston's *Christ in Literature*, 340-343. Dr. Tyng's *Family Commentary*, p. 475, for illustration of Malchus's ingratitude.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Judas Iscariot is the by-word of the human race. In his *Vision of Hell* Dante has placed him in the lowest of the circles of the damned, as the sole sharer with Satan himself of the very uttermost punishment; and the poet's verdict is that of mankind.—*Stalker*.

II. Selling the soul. Many a man sits retailing out heaven and salvation for pence and half-pence, and seldom vends any commodity; but he sells his soul with it, like brown paper, into the bargain.—*Sydney Smith*.

III. Judas legend. You remember how, in the old legend, St. Brandan, in his northward voyage, saw a man sitting on an iceberg, and with horror recognized him as the traitor Judas; and the traitor told him how at Christmas-time, amid the drench of the burning lake, an angel had touched his arm, and bidden him one hour to cool his agony on an iceberg in the Arctic Sea; and, when he asked the cause of this mercy, bade him recognize in him the leper to whom he gave a cloak for shelter from the wind in Joppa, and how for that kind deed this respite was allotted him.—*Farrar*.

IV. Christ healing Malchus' ear.

Learn from yon Orient shell, to love thy foe,
And strew with pearls the hand that brings thee low.
Free, like yon rock, from base vindictive pride,
Emblaze with gems the wrist that rends thy side.

Oriental Poet, quoted in Hitchcock's Religion of Geology, p. 177.

PRACTICAL.

1. It is not strange that some bad professors creep into the Church, since one in twelve even of Christ's own disciples, was false.

2. The Church can prosper in spite of some unworthy members.

3. Judas, like present unworthy members, proved that there was no hidden evil, no trickery, in Christ and his disciples; else he would have revealed it in self-defence.

4. We see the powerlessness of mere good example to save men. No one ever lived in better company than Judas.

5. The Judas talent does not necessarily lead to the Judas side, or the Judas end.

6. Bad men will always find some opportunity to sin.

7. God uses even bad men, and compels them to carry out his designs; but wrong-doing is none the better on that account.

8. Ver. 47. There may be a great activity and energy in Christ's service, which does more harm than good.

9. There is always weakness and injury when the Church depends upon carnal weapons.

10. Ver. 54. It is dangerous to follow Christ afar off: (1) it leads into temptation; (2) it is away from the source of help and strength; (3) it brings the weakness of an evil conscience.

11. Those follow Christ afar off (1) who follow from curiosity; (2) those who are far from Christ in spirit and sympathy; (3) those who do little for the conversion of the world for whom Christ died.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The natural subject of to-day's lesson is BETRAYING CHRIST: (1) *Judas the betrayer* (ver. 43): his life and character; how he became so bad under such teaching and example; why Christ chose such a man for a disciple. (2) *The betrayal* (vers. 43-45): set out the picture as given in all the evangelists; the motives of Judas; how men now betray Christ. (3) *The effect of the betrayal on Judas*: his repentance; in what was it false; how his sin and repentance differed from Peter's. (4) *The effect of the betrayal on Christ*: picture the scene of the capture; the vain efforts of two disciples; the course the disciples took; following afar off.

LESSON VI. — NOVEMBER 5.

JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL. — MARK 14: 55-72.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* — ISA. 53: 7.

TIME. — Early Friday morning, April 7, A. D. 30, between one and six o'clock; immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE. — The palace of Caiaphas, the high priest in Jerusalem.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Rome (17th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (5th); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (34th). Caiaphas, high priest.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 26: 59-75. The trial (vers. 55-65) is found in Luke 22: 63-71, and John 18: 19-24. Peter's denial (vers. 66-72), found in Luke 22: 55-62, and John 18: 17, 18, 25-27.

ORDER OF EVENTS. — After the arrest, and its incidents as given in the last lesson, (1) Jesus was taken first to the house of Annas, ex-high priest (John 18: 13). (2) Next to the palace of Caiaphas, Peter and John following (John 18: 15). (3) Here was a preliminary examination before Caiaphas (John 18: 19-24). (4) The trial before the council, illegal because held at night, — before three o'clock the cock-crowing (Matt. 26: 59-65. Mark 14: 55-64). (5) Peter's three denials during the trial (Matt. 26: 69-75. Mark 14: 66-72). (6) After the Sanhedrim had pronounced him guilty, it suspends its session till break of day. (7) During this interval Jesus is exposed to the insults of his enemies (Matt. 26: 67, 68. Mark 14: 65. Luke 22: 63-65). (8) At the dawn of day the Sanhedrim re-assembles (Matt. 27: 1. Mark 15: 1. Luke 22: 66). (9) After hearing Christ's confession again, he is formally condemned to death for blasphemy (Luke 22: 66-71). (10) He is bound, and sent to Pilate (Mark 15: 1).

THE TRIAL. — I. **The Court.** The court convened to try Jesus Christ was the Sanhedrim, or Sanhedrin. It consisted of chief priests, that is, the heads of the twenty-four priestly classes; scribes, that is, rabbis learned in the literature of the church; and elders, who were chosen from amongst the most influential of the laity. Jewish tradition puts the number of members at seventy-one. The high priest usually presided: the vice-president sat at his right hand. The other councillors were ranged in front of these two in the form of a semicircle. Two scribes or clerks attended, who on criminal trials registered the votes, one for acquittal, the other for condemnation. — *Abbott*. The priests were there, whose greed and selfishness he had reproved; the elders, whose hypocrisy he had branded;

the scribes, whose ignorance he had exposed; and, worse than all, the worldly, sceptical Sadducees, the most cruel and dangerous of opponents, whose empty sapience he had confuted. — *Farrar*. II. **Their authority.** The Sanhedrin had power to try those charged with capital offences, but it had no power to execute the sentence of death (John 18: 31). — *Andrews*. III. **The trial.** The whole criminal procedure in the Pentateuch rests upon three principles: (1) publicity of the trial, (2) entire liberty of defence allowed to the accused, and (3) a guaranty against the dangers of testimony: "one witness is no witness." There must be at least two or three who know the fact. — *M. Dupin*. Throughout the whole course of the trial, the rules of the Jewish law of procedure were grossly violated, and the accused was deprived of rights belonging even to the meanest citizen. He was arrested in the night, bound as a malefactor, beaten before his arraignment, and struck in open court during the trial. He was tried on a feast-day, and before sunrise. He was compelled to criminate himself, and this under an oath of solemn judicial adjuration; and he was sentenced on the same day of the conviction. *In all these particulars the law was wholly disregarded.* — *Prof. Greenleaf's Trial of Jesus, in the Testimony of the Evangelists*. IV. **The accusation.** The crime for which Jesus was condemned before the Sanhedrin was his alleged blasphemy; i.e., an assumption of power and authority which belonged to Jehovah alone (Matt. 26: 65). But when he was brought before Pilate they changed the accusation to one of treason against the Roman government, as the only one of which Pilate would take cognizance (Luke 23: 2).

INTRODUCTION.

Reading the Gospels side by side, we soon perceive, that, of the three successive trials which our Lord underwent at the hands of the Jews, the first only — that before Annas — is related to us by St. John; the second — that before Caiaphas — by St. Matthew and St. Mark; the third — that before the Sanhedrin — by St. Luke alone. — *Farrar*.

55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death: and found none.

56. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58. We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'

Now the chief priests and 55 the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found it not. For many bare false witness 56 against him, and their witness agreed not together. And 57 there stood up certain, and bare false witness against him saying, We heard him say, I 58 will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made

¹ Ch. 15: 29. John 2: 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Trial of Jesus.** — Vers. 55-65. 55. Chief priests . . . council. See above. Sought for witness . . . to put him to death. Not to ascertain the truth, but to destroy one whom they considered a personal enemy, was this trial conducted (John 5: 18; 7: 19, 25; 8: 37, 40; 11: 50). — *Abbott*. Found none. Probably no two witnesses could be found, out of the ranks of the disciples, who had ever heard out of his own lips an avowal of his Messiahship. — *Andrews's Life of Christ*. And one was of no use alone (Deut. 19: 15.)

56. **Many bare false witness.** What they said was contradictory, or not to the point. What sort of witnesses were called? All who know any thing of the Prisoner? What evidence might *then* be given! those once blind, lame, sick, testifying to his love and power. Would *this* suit these just judges? Ah! they take care to call no witnesses for the defence. — *Stock*. Agreed not together. The haste which marked all the proceedings of the trial had probably prevented previous concert, and the judges could not for very shame convict in the face of glaring discrepancies. — *Ellicott*.

57. **There arose certain.** At last they found two who seemed to agree, and have a charge of some weight.

58. **I will destroy this temple.** The utterance of words tending to bring the temple into contempt was regarded as so grave an offence that it afterwards formed a capital charge against the first martyr, Stephen (Acts 6: 13). — *Maclear*. Note that his accusers were obliged to go back three years to the very opening of his ministry, to find what they

59. But neither so did their witness agree together.

60. 'And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

61. ² But he held his peace, and answered nothing.

³ Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

without hands. And not even 59 so did their witness agree together. And the high priest 60 stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his 61 peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of

¹ Matt. 26: 62. ² Isa. 53: 7. ³ Matt. 26: 63.

might even *call* testimony (John 2: 19). I will build another. Observe, in reference to this charge, (1) that Christ had not said so: he had said (John 2: 19) that the Jews would destroy the temple, which he would restore; (2) that they understood, at least partially, that he had referred to his own body (Matt. 27: 40, 63); (3) that in their testimony these false witnesses did not agree (Mark 14: 53); the nature of their discrepancy is, perhaps, indicated by the variations in the testimony as reported by Matthew and Mark; (4) even if he had used the words attributed to him, they would have formed no ground for a death-sentence. The charge illustrates the growth of calumny. — *Abbott*. They were to be the destroyers. He had but promised to rebuild. It was just one of those perjuries which was all the more perjured, because it bore some distant semblance to the truth. — *Farrar*.

59. Neither so did their witness agree. Their statements varied so much that there was not sufficient testimony on any one point to convict. Therefore *this FIRST PLAN FAILED*. — *J. F. and B.*

60. And the high priest stood up. The impressive silence which our Lord preserved while false witnesses were being sought against him (Matt. 26: 62) was galling to the pride



HIGH PRIEST.

of Caiaphas, who saw that nothing remained but to force him, if possible, to criminate himself. — *Maclaur*. This was their *SECOND PLAN*. In the midst. The high priest, leaving his official seat, came forward into the middle of the semicircle, in which the members of the Sanhedrim were seated. The accused stood facing them, so that the high priest was then immediately side by side with our Lord. — *Cook*. Answerest thou nothing? The question implies a long-continued silence, while witness after witness were uttering their clumsy falsehoods. — *Ellicott*. In the silence itself we may perhaps trace a deliberate fulfilment of Isa. 53: 7. Laying aside every thing like judicial impartiality and calmness, he chides our Lord for his dignified silence amid the Babel of accusation. He would have liked that our Lord had lost command of his reticence, and had returned railing for railing. — *Morison*. What is it which these witness? The first object of Caiaphas was to draw out an answer to the allegations, which, as he well knew, would not suffice, as they then stood, for condemnation. Had our Lord answered, it must have been either to deny that he had uttered the words, which would have involved a long and captious investigation, since they were in part correctly reported; or to explain them, a course equally unadvisable, for they certainly would not have accepted any statement of his as to the meaning. — *Cook*.

61. Answered nothing. With the sublime calm of one who is conscious of his own superior worth, Jesus meekly abstains from uttering a single word before this contemptible tribunal, in the way of self-vindication. — *Meyer*. It was no part of his duty, as a defendant, to unravel the contradictions of his unprincipled accusers. — *Morison*. Our Lord was silent; for in answering he must have opened to them the meaning of his words, which was not the work of this his hour, nor fitting for that audience. — *Alford*. Truth is never mute for want of arguments of defence, but sometimes silent, out of holy wisdom. — *Lake*. Said unto him. I adjure thee (Matt. 26: 63). This was the regular legal formula for administering oaths, and was binding on witnesses without their answering (Lev. 5: 1). — *Stock*. Art thou the Christ? Caiaphas became desperate, and adopted a resource which our own rules of evidence would declare most infamous, and which was also wholly adverse to the first principles of Mosaic jurisprudence, and the like of which occurs in no circumstance of Hebrew history. It was that of putting the prisoner upon his oath to answer questions framed for his own crimination. — *Kitt*. The Son of the Blessed; i.e., of

62. And Jesus said, I am :¹ and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64. Ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

the Blessed? And Jesus said, 62 I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest 63 rent his clothes, and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the 64 blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him

¹ Matt. 24: 30; 26: 64. Luke 22: 69.

God, since the Rabbis used a word of this meaning as the ordinary name for God. It occurs only here in the New Testament. The action of the high priest indicates that this implied a distinct question: Do you claim, in claiming to be the Messiah ("the Christ"), to be also "the Son of God"? — *Schaff*. The difficulty of this question consisted in this: if he *confessed* that he was the Son of God, they stood ready to condemn him for blasphemy; if he *denied it*, they were prepared to condemn him for being an impostor, and for deluding the people under pretence of being the Messiah. — *Barnes*.

62. *Jesus said*. Comparing Luke's account (22: 67-71) it appears that Christ first protested against the illegality of the question. After uttering this protest, he bears testimony concerning himself. See John 10: 17, 18. *I am*. This calm response, drawn out by the oath, is a public declaration of his Messiahship. It insured his death, but laid full responsibility upon them. — *Schaff*. In the days of his happier ministry, when they would have taken him by force to make him a King, he had kept his title of Messiah utterly in the background; but now, at this awful decisive moment, when death was near, — when, humanly speaking, nothing could be gained, every thing *must* be lost, by the avowal, — there thrilled through all the ages the solemn answer, "I AM." — *Farrar*. *Son of man*. Jesus, wishing to hasten a decision which he knew to be already taken, boldly and spontaneously passes in his answer beyond the strict contents of the question, and declares himself to be not only the Messiah, but at the same time the Son of man, sharing the divine glory (see Dan. 7: 13). — *Godet*. No words in the whole Gospel records are more decisive against the views of those who would fain see in our Lord only a great moral teacher, like Socrates or Cakya Mouni. At the very crisis of his history, when denial would have saved his life, he asserts his claim to be all that the most devout Christians have ever believed him to be — *Plumptre*. *Ye shall see . . . in the clouds of heaven*. The "Ye shall see" is to the council, the representatives of the chosen people, so soon to be judged by him to whom all judgment is committed; the "power" in contrast to his present weakness, sitting, even as they now sat to judge him; and the "coming in the clouds of heaven" looks onward to the awful time of the end when every eye shall see him. — *Alford*. Note the *change of places*; he *then* on the judgment-seat, they *then* at his bar! — *Stock*.

63. *Rent his clothes*. The act was almost as much a formal sign of condemnation as the putting-on of the black cap by an English judge. — *Plumptre*. The practice of rending the clothes on occasions of supposed blasphemy was based on 2 Kings 18: 37. Originally it was a natural outburst of intense grief, and was involuntary; but at a later period it became a mere form regulated by special rules. The rent made in the garment was from the neck downward, and about a span in length. The body-dress and outer garment were left untouched. — *Lange*. *What need we any further witnesses?* They had called but one true witness: his testimony they rejected; and yet on the strength of his testimony they were about to condemn him! — *W*.

64. *Blasphemy*. Blasphemy here "denotes reproachful, irreverent, or insulting language concerning God, or any of his names or attributes." Such would be the making God to be only like a man. Hence, had Jesus not been the Messiah, what he said *would* have been blasphemy. In his passion it never seemed to occur to Caiaphas that after all Christ *might* be the Son of God. — *W*. What men want of reason in their opinions, they generally supply and make up with rage. — *Archbishop Tillotson*. *What think ye?* A formal putting of the question to vote. *And they all*. It may therefore be inferred that none had been summoned who were known or suspected to favor our Lord, though they may have been called to the more formal council at daybreak. — *Cook*. *Condemned him*. This formal condemnation was, as they imagined, according to the law (Lev. 24: 16). Compare Deut. 18: 20. The Sanhedrim was forbidden to investigate any capital crime during the night, and according to the Roman law a sentence pronounced before dawn was not valid. This test vote, however, they considered as settling the question. — *Schaff*.

The council now adjourned, to meet at daybreak, when they could legally pronounce the sentence. In the mean time occurred the maltreatment by his lawless enemies described in the next verse.

65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66. ¶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

67. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

to be worthy of death. And 65 some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the officers received him with blows of their hands.

And as Peter was beneath in 66 the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and saith, Thou also wast with the

1 Matt. 26: 58, 59. Luke 22: 55. John 18: 26.

65. Some began to spit. Spitting was considered among the Jews as an expression of the greatest contempt (Deut. 25:9. Num. 12:14). Even to spit *before* another, was regarded as an offence, and treated as such by heathen also. — *Lange*. Cover his face. The covering of the face was a mark of a condemned man, held as unworthy to behold and enjoy the light of the sun or of the prince's countenance. — *Edward Leigh*. Buffet him. Struck him with their fists. To say unto him, Prophecy. After covering his face, they called upon him to tell them by a supernatural intuition who struck him: if he were unable to do that, how could he know the great events of futurity? The malice was not therefore merely idle mockery: it had a serious intent; it would supply an argument by which some waverers might be moved. — *Cook*. And the servants. Better, officers, as in Revised Version. Strike him. They received him with blows (see Revised Version): that is, they received him into custody till the regular meeting of the Sanhedrin in the morning; but, the moment he was committed to them, they received him with blows. — *Morison*. In the original no less than five forms of beating are referred to by the Evangelists in describing this pathetic scene. Did strike him with the palms of their hands. The hands they bound had healed the sick, and raised the dead; the lips they smote had calmed the winds and waves. One word, and his smiters might have been laid low in death. But as he had begun, he would end, — as self-restrained in the use of his awful powers on his own behalf as if he had been the most helpless of men. — *Geikie*. Behold affronts and indignities which the world thinks it right never to pardon, which the Son of God endures with a divine meekness! Let us cast at the feet of Jesus that false honor, that quick sense of affronts, which exaggerates every thing and pardons nothing, and, above all, that devilish determination in resenting injuries. — *Quesnel*. Such treatment of our Lord shocks us: but so do we strike the Son of man when we scoff at his word; so do we buffet him when we show his cause contempt; so do we spit upon him when we take his name in vain. — *Anon*. Why does he not avenge these insults? Because his hands, though no longer bound with cord, are restrained by love. — *Tyng*.

II. Peter's Denials. — Vers. 66-72. While the preliminary examinations were being held before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, Peter and John entered the court of the palace, and listened to the proceedings. In the hall the trial was proceeding; just without in the court, but in full view, Peter denied his Master. It was between one and three o'clock in the morning.

66. Peter was beneath in the palace. To understand the details that follow, it is necessary to have in mind the construction of Oriental houses. An Oriental house is usually built around a quadrangular interior court, into which there is a passage, sometimes arched, from the street, through the front part of the house: this is closed by a heavy folding gate, with a smaller wicket for single persons. This entrance is tended by a porter, who in this case was a maid (John 18: 17). In the larger palaces this servant sat in a porter's lodge at the entrance. The courtyard was very generally paved or flagged, and was sometimes ornamented with beds of flowers, and was open to the sky. — *Robinson*. It is not implied that the apartment in which our Saviour was tried was an up-stairs floor or story. It is only implied that the reception-hall, that entered off the quadrangular court, was raised a little above its level. — *Morison*. In this reception-hall the trial was held. Peter was in the court, a few steps down. Had Peter gone here to defend or comfort his Master, or to preach the gospel, he would have been safe; but going from curiosity, and hiding in shame, he was in a condition that prepared him for his fall. Peter was in bad company, which is to many an occasion of sin; and those who needlessly thrust themselves into it go on the Devil's ground, and may expect to be tempted and snared. — *Henry*. One of the maids. John speaks of her as the damsel who kept the door of the porch, or passage into the court. She probably observed Peter carefully when he entered with John, and afterward when he seated himself with the servants of the high priest.

68. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

69. ¹ And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70. And he denied it again. ² And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: ³ for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

71. But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72. ⁴ And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Nazarene, *even* Jesus. But 68 he denied, saying, I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And the maid saw him, 69 and began again to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them. But he again denied it. 70 And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art *one* of them; for thou art a Galilean. But he began to curse, 71 and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And 72 straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

¹ Matt. 26: 71. Luke 22: 58. John 18: 25. ² Matt. 26: 73. Luke 22: 59. John 18: 26. ³ Acts 2: 7. ⁴ Matt. 26: 75.

67. **Peter warming himself.** Peter entered through the arched gateway, warmed himself at an open fire, kindled in the courtyard in a brazier or portable stove. (see John 18: 18), from which point he could probably see and partially overhear the preliminary examination of Jesus. — *Abbott*. Looked upon him. Something about his appearance or manner excites her suspicion. Then she thinks she remembers seeing him with Jesus. **Jesus of Nazareth.** This was a contemptuous epithet among the Jews of Judea; better rendered in the Revised Version, "the Nazarene, even Jesus."

68. **But he denied.** Peter's first denial. So the evil principle gained ground. Before, he followed at a distance; now he denies. This is the second gradation in his fall. **I know not, neither understand.** This was the grossest and most unblushing falsehood. — *Jacobus*. It appears that his first denial embraced also all knowledge of his Master. Thus his denials, from beginning to end, went beyond what was necessary for his exculpation; for he was only charged with being a follower of Jesus, whereas he denied that he ever knew him. — *Owen*. Note the steps leading to this denial: (1) Peter's self-confidence (Matt. 26: 33); (2) his indolence (Mark 14: 37); (3) his cowardly compromise (Mark 14: 54); (4) needless venturing into evil company (ver. 66). Startling as it appears, his heart had been preparing for it. It was the fruit of seeds that he himself had sown. Men fall in private long before they fall in public. The tree falls with a great crash, but the decay which accounts for it is often not discovered till it is down on the ground. — *Ryle*. **He went out into the porch.** The vestibule leading to the street, — no doubt finding the fireplace too *hot* for him; possibly also with the hope of escaping. — *J. F. and B.* **The cock crew.** It was probably now not far from one o'clock. Peter, however, went on in his downward course, notwithstanding this signal of warning. Very likely his mind was so filled with anxiety and fear that he was not reminded of the prediction of Jesus. — *Clark*. Or, very likely, in his excitement, he did not consciously even hear the sound.

69. **This is one of them.** Probably the statement was made in both cases in malicious banter or light ridicule, as the charge evidently led to no further consequences. — *Lange*.

70. **He denied it again.** Peter's second denial. Matthew tells us that he even denied knowing him, and that too with an oath, calling God to witness, and with the somewhat contemptuous form, "I know not the man." This denial is thus a step in advance on the first. — *Clark*. **A little after.** About an hour after (Luke 22: 59). **They that stood by.** The main charge was prominently made by *one*, — a kinsman of Malchus, who had seen Peter in the garden, and was known to St. John from his acquaintance with the high priest's household (John 18: 26). — *Farrar*. **Galilean.** During the interval Peter, perhaps the better to allay suspicion, joins in the conversation, and is recognized as a Galilean by his manner of speech. As most of the disciples of Jesus were Galileans, this draws attention. — *Andrews*. The Galileans were unable to pronounce the gutturals distinctly, and they lisped, pronouncing *sh* like *th*. — *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. Happy he whose speech bewrays him to be a disciple of Christ! — *Henry*.

71. **But he began to curse.** Peter's *third* denial. "As if he should say, The curse of God alight upon me if I know him." — *Peterson*. This was an advance upon his second. He not only, with an oath, repeats what he had said in the second, but he affirms it with imprecations of divine wrath on himself if he spake not the truth. Perhaps Peter the

fisherman was a profane man; and, in the time of temptation, the old habit, long cast off, re-asserted itself. — *Abbott*. The gradations of guilt in the denials of Peter: (1) ambiguous evasion; (2) distinct denial with a false oath; (3) awful abjuration with solemn imprecations on himself. — *Lange*. The second time the cock crew. This was at the opening of the fourth or morning watch, at about three o'clock. The cock often crows about midnight, or not long after; and again always about the third hour, or daybreak. When, therefore, "the cock-crowing" is spoken of alone, this last is always meant. Hence the name cock-crowing for the third watch of the night, which ended at the third hour after midnight. — *Robinson*. Peter called to mind. It was at this point that the Lord turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61). The hall where Jesus was being tried was probably open toward the court, and Jesus may easily have heard all the denials of Peter. Now he turns and looks at Peter, and brings to his mind what he had a few hours before foretold. — *P*. When he thought thereon, then he went out (Matt 26:75) and wept bitterly. He went out, not as Judas into the night of despair, but, as has been beautifully said, "to meet the morning dawn." If the angel of innocence had left him, the angel of repentance took him gently by the hand. — *Farrar*. Contrast his repentance with that of Judas. His repentance he attested, (1) by the bitterness of his tears; (2) by his humble submission to his Lord's subsequent rebuke (John 21:15-17); (3) by his subsequent courage in confessing Christ in the face of threatened danger (Acts 4:8-12, 19); (4) by the thoroughness with which he learned the lesson of humility, as illustrated by his own subsequent epistles (see particularly 1 Pet. 1:5, 17; 3:15; 4:12). — *Abbott*. We find, in tracing Peter's career, that his zeal was mixed with many inconsistencies. But Christ saw that he had in him the noble material of a vital and victorious apostleship. He refashioned him into a self-commanding as well as an eager champion, and at last made him first and foremost of the twelve companions of his Lord. — *F. D. Huntington*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Prof. Greenleaf's *Testimony of the Evangelists* gives three accounts of the trial of Jesus: one by Salvador, from the Jewish point of view; the others by M. Dupin, a French lawyer, and Prof. Greenleaf, of the Law School of Harvard University. *Farrar's Life of Christ*, chap. 58, 59; *Geikie's*, chap. 61; *Hanna's*, p. 663; *Andrews's*, 485-509. *A. Tholuck's Light from the Cross*. *Wayland's Salvation by Christ*, "The Fall of Peter." *Sermons* by Fitch and Saurin.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The mockery. For what could be equal to this insolence? On that face which the sea, when it saw it, had revered, from which the sun, when it beheld it on the cross, turned away his rays, they did spit, and struck it with the palms of their hands, and smote upon the head. — *Chrysostom*.

II. Peter's swearing. Peter's outburst of profanity was doubtless the breaking-forth of an early habit which he had overcome as a disciple of Christ. It is hard to get wholly rid of early sins. I remember an old house in a country village of Massachusetts which was once a tavern, with the bar-room where now is the parlor. But a friend who lived in the house said, that, though more than 20 years had passed away, yet if that parlor were kept closed a few days it would smell of the rum and tobacco which defiled it in its early bar-room days. — *P*.

III. Peter's repentance. It is a touching and beautiful tradition, true to the sincerity of his repentance, if not as a historical reality, that, all his life long, the remembrance of this night never left him, and that, morning by morning, he rose at the hour when the look of his Master had entered his soul, to pray once more for pardon. — *Geikie*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 55. There is no valid objection against Christ, or Christianity, or the Bible.
2. Ver. 56. Those who make objections do not agree together, but the objection of one opposer is devoured by the objections of another opposer.
3. Vers. 55-64. But those who are determined to oppose religion will find some fault by perverting and misunderstanding the truth.
4. Let it never surprise Christians if, like their Master, they are slandered and misrepresented by the world.
5. Ver. 65. In the Christian combat, not the striker, as in the Olympic contest, but he who is struck, wins the crown. This is the law in the celestial theatre, where angels are the lookers-on. — *Chrysostom*.
6. Ver. 66. He who is not in the place of duty is peculiarly exposed to temptations.
7. Ver. 68. Without the Spirit, St. Peter trembled at the voice of a maid-servant: with the Spirit, he withstood princes and kings. — *S. Jerome*.

8. Ver. 70. Speech is a revealer, (1) of nationality; (2) of origin; (3) of intelligence; (4) of creed; (5) of moral character; (6) of religious condition. — *Biblical Museum*.

9. Ver. 71. We have reason to suspect the truth of that which is backed with rash oaths and imprecations. None but the Devil's sayings need the Devil's proofs. — *Henry*.

10. Ver. 72. He went out. It is not enough to break with sin unless you break with sinners too. — *Samuel Lavington*.

11. Peter denied Christ once, and wept forever after it. We often deny him, and never weep for it at all. — *S. Augustine*.

12. You have followed him in his sin: now go, and follow him in his repentance. — *S. Ambrose*.

13. Peter's sin, repentance, and pardon afford to the disciples of Christ a witness of how great is the forgiving kindness of the Lord, and how large his pardoning mercy, even to apostates. — *Abbott*.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Here are brought before us TWO TRIALS: (1) *The trial of Christ* (vers. 55-65), with all its circumstances, and the majesty of innocence and faith. (2) *The trial of Peter* (vers. 66-71), and his fall before temptation; the steps that led to it; the aggravations. (3) *Contrasts in the results of the trials* (ver. 72): Christ really victorious; Peter's repentance; Peter's sin contrasted with that of Judas; the proof that Peter's repentance was sincere.

LESSON VII. — NOVEMBER 12.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE. — MARK 15: 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *He is despised and rejected of men.* — ISA. 53: 3.

TIME. — Friday morning, between five and nine o'clock, April 7, A. D. 30.

PLACE. — Jerusalem. The trial before the Sanhedrim was probably in their usual council-chamber, called *Gazith*, at the south-east corner of one of the courts of the temple; or else in a hall near the gate Shusan, close by the temple. The trial before Pilate was either in the tower of Antonia, near the temple, or at Herod's palace, on the northern brow of Mount Zion.

PARALLEL PASSAGES. — Matt. 27: 1, 2, 11-26. Luke 23: 1-25. John 18: 28-40; 19: 1.

ORDER OF EVENTS AT CHRIST'S TRIAL.

1. Second session of the Sanhedrim (Matt. 27: 1. Mark 15: 1).
2. First application to Pilate (John 18: 28-32).
3. Formal accusation before Pilate (Matt. 27: 11. Mark 15: 1, 2).
4. First colloquy between Christ and Pilate (John 18: 33-38. Mark 15: 2).
5. Acquittal; further charges; Christ's silence (Matt. 27: 12-14. Mark 15: 3-5. Luke 23: 4, 5).
6. Case sent to Herod (Luke 23: 6-12).
7. Before Pilate again. Formal acquittal (Luke 23: 13-16).
8. Jesus or Barabbas (Matt. 27: 15-18. Mark 15: 6-10).
9. Message of warning from Pilate's wife (while people are deciding) (Matt. 27: 19).
10. Barabbas chosen. Cries of "Crucify him!" (Matt. 27: 20-22. Mark 15: 11-13).
11. Efforts of Pilate to save Jesus (Matt. 27: 23. Mark 15: 12-14).
12. Pilate washes his hands (Matt. 27: 24, 25).
13. Sentence of crucifixion (Mark 15: 15. Luke 23: 24, 25).
14. Scourging and mockery (Matt. 27: 26-30. Mark 15: 16-19. John 19: 1-3).
15. Further efforts of Pilate to save Jesus (John 19: 4-16).
16. Led away to be crucified (Matt. 27: 31. Mark 15: 20).

INTRODUCTION.

Here we have the description, on the one hand, of the series of manœuvres used by the Jews to obtain from Pilate the execution of the sentence, and, on the other, of the series of Pilate's expedients, or counter-manœuvres, to get rid of the case which was forced on him. — *Godet*. This last trial is full of passion and movement: it involves a threefold change of scene, a threefold accusation, a threefold acquittal by the Romans, a threefold rejection by the Jews, a threefold warning to Pilate, and a threefold effort on his part, made with ever-increasing energy and ever-deepening agitation, to baffle the accusers and to set the victim free. — *Farrar*.

And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and deliver-

¹ Ps. 2 : 2. Matt. 27 : 1. Luke 22 : 66; 23 : 1. John 18 : 28. Acts 3 : 13; 4 : 26.

I. Jesus accused before Pilate.—Vers. 1-5. **1. And straightway in the morning.** The morning here means the hour of sunrise (*Cook*), about half-past five. The informal meeting of the Sanhedrim, held some time before dawn on this Friday morning, at the palace of Caiaphas, had adjourned, and the mob were mocking Jesus. But as soon as morning dawned, and it was lawful to condemn Jesus, the Sanhedrim, as described in this



We learn from John (18:28, 29) that the members of the Sanhedrim who led Christ to Pilate refused to enter the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled. Thereupon he comes out to them, and asks the nature of the accusation. — *Andrews.* The Jews began very skillfully by trying to get Pilate to execute the sentence of death, without having submitted it to his confirmation (John 18:30). The latter, more adroit than they, and eagerly profiting by the turn thus given to the case, declared that he was well pleased not to interfere in the

2. ¹ And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3. And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4. ² And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5. ³ But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

ed him up to Pilate. And ² Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering saith unto him, Thou sayest. And the chief ³ priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again ⁴ asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus no more answered any thing; inasmuch that Pilate marvelled.

¹ Matt. 27:11. ² Matt. 27:13. ³ Isa. 53:7. John 19:9.

matter, and that he left Christ in their hands; i.e., within the limits of their competency (the execution of purely Jewish penalties, — excommunication from the synagogue, scourging, etc.) (John 18:3). — *Godet*. And Pilate asked him. This was a private investigation within the *pretorium*, after the Jews, carefully suppressing the *religious grounds* on which they had condemned our Lord, had advanced against him a triple accusation of, (1) seditious agitation; (2) prohibition of the payment of the tribute-money; and (3) the assumption of the suspicious title of "King of the Jews" (Luke 23:2). — *Maclear*. This last accusation amounted to a charge of treason, — the greatest crime known to Roman law. Of the three points of accusation, (2) was utterly false; (1) and (3), though in a sense true, were not true in the sense intended. — *A. Carr*. Art thou the King of the Jews. Pilate, not unacquainted with the prevailing Messianic hope, formulates his question very precisely. — *Lange*. Pilate may well have been perplexed. Christ had claimed to be King; promulgated laws; organized in the heart of Cesar's province the germ of an imperishable kingdom; entered Jerusalem in triumph, hailed by the throng as King of the Jews; and his arrest had been forcibly resisted by one of his followers. These facts a wily priesthood could easily pervert and exaggerate so as to give color to their accusation. — *Abbott*. Thou sayest. This is not to be taken as a doubtful answer, but as a *strong affirmation*. — *Alford*. The answer of defence of Jesus (John 18:34-38) is that he is a King, but that his "kingdom is not of this world," therefore (it is inferred) the "perversion of the people" was not a rebellion that threatened the Roman government. The defence was complete, as Pilate admits: "I find no fault in him" (Luke 23:4). — *A. Carr*. This is Pilate's first emphatic and unhesitating acquittal (John 18:38). — *Farrar*. The Hebrew prisoner who stood before the Roman judge claimed to be the King of men, and eighteen centuries have only verified his claim. There is not a man bearing the Christian name who does not, in one form or another, acknowledge him to be the sovereign of his soul. The whole fabric of the Christian religion rests on the monarchy of Christ. — *F. W. Robertson*.

3. Chief priests accused him. Pilate's public decided acquittal only kindled the fury of his enemies into yet fiercer flame. After all that they had hazarded, was their purpose to be foiled by the intervention of the very Gentiles on whom they had relied for its bitter consummation? — *Farrar*. Of many things. Some are given in Luke 23:2-5 (see under ver. 2). Answered nothing. He had already explained to Pilate the nature of his kingdom, and satisfied him that he is innocent of sedition; after that he keeps silence. He will answer honest perplexity, but not wilful slander. — *Abbott*. He made no answer, for the reasons apparently, (1) that they were false; (2) that they were simply malicious; (3) that any reply he could make would simply be useless; (4) that under the circumstances his personal dignity forbade any attempt at vindication. — *Coules*. (5) He knew his time had come, and he would not interfere with his Father's plan. — *W*.

5. Pilate marvelled. Convinced as Pilate was of the innocence of Christ, he was all the more at a loss to understand the forbearance with which he maintained such sublime silence. — *Meyer*.

II. The Choice between Jesus and Barabbas. — Vcrs. 6-11. Among the "many things" referred to in ver. 4, was the chief scene of his seditious teachings — Galilee. Catching at the mention of Galilee, Pilate sends him to Herod Antipas, — who had come up to Jerusalem to the passover — under pretence that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction. Provoked, however, at receiving no answer to his questions, and seeing the vehemence of Christ's accusers, Herod, with his soldiers, made a mockery of his regal claims, and sent him back to Pilate arrayed in the imperial purple (Luke 23:6-11). — *Smith*. On Christ's return from Herod, Pilate tries another expedient. Seating himself on the judgment-seat, and calling the chief priests and elders, he declares to them that neither himself nor Herod had found any fault in him. He would therefore release him according to custom (Luke

6. Now ¹ at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7. And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10. For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

Now at the feast he used to 6
release unto them one prisoner,
whom they asked of him. And 7
there was one called Barab-
bas, *lying* bound with them
that had made insurrection,
men who in the insurrection
had committed murder. And 8
the multitude went up and
began to ask him *to do* as he
was wont to do unto them.
And Pilate answered them, 9
saying, Will ye that I release
unto you the King of the
Jews? For he perceived that 10
for envy the chief priests had

¹ Matt. 27 : 15. Luke 23 : 17. John 18 : 39.

23:13-16). — *Andrews*. Thus Pilate the second time, and more formally than at first, acquits Christ.

6. **Released one prisoner.** The Roman and Greek custom of releasing prisoners upon the birthdays and festive seasons of the emperors, and upon days of public rejoicing, had been undoubtedly introduced among the Jews, before the time of Pilate, to soften the Roman yoke. — *Browne*. We must not overlook a reference to the significance of the pass-over. — *Meyer*. A criminal's sins passed over.

7. **Barabbas.** This word means, (1) according to some, Bar-Abbas = *son of Abba* = "son of the father;" or, (2) according to others, Bar-Rabbas = "*son of a rabbi*." In three MSS. of Matt. 27 : 16, his name is given as "*Jesus Bar-abbas*." — *Cambridge Bible*. Matthew says he was a notable prisoner. Barabbas was plainly a ringleader in one of those fierce and fanatic outbreaks against the Roman domination, which fast succeeded one another in the latter days of the Jewish commonwealth. This at once explains how it was possible for the chief priests, with their religious pretensions, to show the interest on his behalf which they did, and explains no less the enthusiasm with which the Jewish populace demanded his liberation. Whether, indeed, Barabbas had actually played the part of a false Christ, setting himself up as the true, we have no means of knowing. It is far from unlikely. — *Trench*. It is remarkable that this man Barabbas was confessedly guilty of the very crime with which the priests and rulers had falsely charged Jesus — that of sedition; and no plainer proof of their hypocrisy could be given to the watchful Pilate than their efforts to release the former and condemn the latter. — *Andrews*. **Committed murder.** In this particular insurrection blood had been shed, and apparently some Roman soldiers had been killed. — *Maclear*. Note particularly the *Revised Version* here.

8. **The multitude.** This seems to imply that a great crowd had collected outside the pretorium while the trial was going on. — *Alford*. **Desire him to do.** Note the wording in the New Version. The mob of the city, pouring from street and alley in the excited Oriental fashion, came streaming up the avenue to the front of the palace, shouting for this annual gift. The cry was for once welcome to Pilate, for he saw in it a loophole of escape from his disagreeable position. — *Stalker*.

9. **Pilate answered.** Pilate had a conviction that Jesus was innocent. Instead of acting at once on that, he parleyed. He argued and debated till the practical force of the conviction was unsettled. A man may unsettle the verdict of his intellect: it is at his peril that he tampers with the convictions of his conscience. — *Robertson*. **Will ye that I release.** Pilate asked that question where he had no right to ask it. A judge in his judgment-hall asking a mob what he should do with their victim! He should have asked his conscience, the law, justice, eternal right; and then he would have received a correct answer. So men now ever get wrong answers when they ask of passion, or pleasure, or popular custom or feelings, what course they shall take. — *P*. **Unto you.** It was the populace he wished to gratify. And most likely he would not have regretted, but rather rejoiced, if the choice of the populace had been at variance with the wishes of the high priest's party. — *Morison*. **King of the Jews.** His use of the term, "the King of the Jews," was probably an attempt to enlist the patriotic feeling of the multitude on the side of the prisoner. What he had seen and heard was enough to make him sure that there was no political danger in that acknowledgment. — *Plumptre*.

10. **For envy.** "For" introduces Pilate's reason for calling him King of the Jews (see John 18 : 29), to wit: because he knew they had brought him to his bar, and transferred him to the Roman jurisdiction, not because they thought him really an enemy to Cesar, or if they did so would have valued him less on that account, but because he was a formid-

11. But ¹the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13. And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

delivered him up. But the ¹¹ chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out ¹³ again, Crucify him. And Pilate ¹⁴ said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly,

¹ Matt. 27:20. Acts 3:14.

able rival of their own, and, if his claims were established, must at once destroy their influence and power. — *Alexander*.

We learn from Matt. 27:19, that, during the interval while the people were making their choice between Christ and Barabbas, Pilate's wife sends to him a message of warning. — *Andrews*. It is a remarkable fact that a woman, and she a heathen, should be the only human being who had the courage to plead the cause of our Saviour during these dreadful hours when his own disciples forsook him, and when the fanatical rulers cried out against him. — *Schaff*.

11. Chief priests moved (stirred up, instigated) the people. While Pilate was receiving this message from his wife, and waiting the answer to his question, the chief priests and elders were busy in the crowd persuading them what answer to give. — *Abbott*. Appealing to their fears, prejudices, and passions; and they turned the current of popular feeling. — *Cook*. We learn from Matt. 27:21, John 18:40, that the people made a distinct choice of Barabbas. The motives which here misled them to so perverted a choice are the same as those which now, as ever, induce most men to choose the appearance instead of the reality, and the curse instead of the blessing. — *Lange*. Whoever commits any action which Christ has forbidden, whoever cherishes any feeling or temper which Christ disapproves, declares as plainly as the Jews did, "I will not have this man, but Barabbas." — *A. W. Hare*.

III. Pilate's Efforts to Release Jesus. — Vers. 12-14. 12. What will ye? This question seems to have been put in disdain and anger; disdain at their fickleness, anger at the failure of his efforts to stem the torrent. — *Maclear*. Do unto him. This is remarkable; since it shows that Pilate made, so to speak, a second offer. He was called upon by the people to release one prisoner only at the festival; but his question implies, that, even after their declared preference of Barabbas, he was willing to leave the fate of the Man to their decision. — *Cook*. He chose this expedient, probably with the idea that the popularity of Jesus would lead the multitude to call for his release. — *Schaff*.

This is a question every person must answer, "What shall I do with this Jesus?" (1) Every person must do something with Jesus. He must accept or reject him. (2) Some try to escape this decision: (a) by refusing to decide, but that is deciding against him; (b) by substitution of other virtues in the place of believing in Christ; (c) by laying the blame on others, on circumstances, on temptations; (d) but it is all in vain. (3) To reject Christ is to reject the sum and soul of all goodness. (4) Rejecting Christ is the great sin of the world. (5) The time will come when those who reject Christ will have to ask, "What can I do without Christ?" — *P*.

13. Cried out again. There had been previous outcries of the people; and with this fresh outburst of fury there was the demand for death. — *Goodwin*. Crucify. It is the first time the word has been named in Pilate's hearing, the first time they tell him articulately what it is they desire to have done with Jesus. Crucify him; give up to that most ignominious of all deaths this meek and gentle man, who he is sure has done no wrong. Can the people mean it? — *Hanna*.

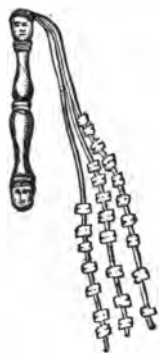
14. Pilate said, . . . What evil hath he done? The question attested the judge's conviction of the innocence of the accused, but it attested also the cowardice of the judge. We find from Luke 23:22, that he had recourse to the desperate expedient of suggesting a milder punishment, chastising, i.e., scourging; but the suggestion itself showed his weakness, and therefore did but stimulate the crowd to persist in their demand for death. — *Ellicott*. Pilate sought to satisfy all: the people, by releasing him; the priests and elders, by chastising him; and himself, by delivering him from death. But he satisfied none. — *Alford*. How many and what various persons bear testimony to the innocence of the Holy One, — Pilate, Herod, Pilate's wife, Judas Iscariot, the thief on the cross, and the centurion who superintended the crucifixion! — *Burton*.

15. ¶ ¹ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

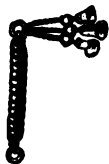
Crucify him. And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

¹ Matt. 27: 26. John 19: 1, 16.

15. **Willing (wishing) to content the multitude.** The word "wishing" points to a decision, a determination. In Matt. 1: 19 the same word is translated "was minded."



SCOURGE.



Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but in the dilemma (of his own making) concluded to gratify the mob. — *Schaff*. Delivered Jesus, . . . to be crucified. Leaving the pretorium, and planting the *Bema* or judgment-seat in the open place called *Gabbatha* (the pavement), Pilate passed sentence on him whom he had so often declared innocent. — *Smith*. By Roman law the examination might take place within the pretorium, but the sentence must be pronounced in public without. — *Andrews*. But he first washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. And all the people said, His blood be on us and on our children. And it was on them: within forty years their city and their nation was destroyed; and tens of thousands were crucified around this same city as they crucified Jesus. Scourged him. The word used for the scourging implies that it was done, not with rods, for Pilate had no lictors, but with what Horace calls the "*horribile flagellum*," of which the Russian knout is the only modern representative. The person to be scourged was bound to a low pillar, that, bending over, the blows might be better inflicted.

ed. — *Andrews*. The scourge was made of several thongs with a handle; the thongs were made rough with bits of iron or bone, for tearing the flesh, and, thus fitted, it was called a *scorpion*. See Ps. 129: 3. Isa. 53: 5. — *Jacobus*.

Thus, then, is Pilate fallen; fallen at last, because he prefers to have the emperor whose kingdom is of this world as his friend, rather than the King whose kingdom is not from hence. The prize for which he staked his soul never became his. Some three years afterward he was removed by the legate of Syria, and then banished by the emperor. — *R. Besser*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

For the order of events in this trial, see *Andrews's Life of Christ*, p. 485, etc. On the trial, see *Greenleaf's Testimony of the Evangelists*, p. 551; *W. Adams's Conversations of Christ with Representative Men*, "Pilate;" *R. S. Candlish, Scripture Characters*, "Pilate Judging our Lord." *Sermons*: by Robertson, series 1, "The Kingdom of the Truth," and "The Scepticism of Pilate;" by H. W. Beecher, series 1, "What will you do with Christ?"

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I **Pilate's wrong decision.** A little way west of Mount Zion, near the Jaffa Gate, is a little terrace, on the top of the water-shed, so level that the rain which comes down from heaven upon it seems at a loss which way to go. But part of it, perhaps by the breath of heaven, is carried over on the west side, and descends into the Valley of Roses, and down to the beautiful plain of Sharon; and there it diffuses itself abroad, and fertility and beauty and flowers and fruits spring up all about the plain, until finally it is all exhaled from the fragrant cups of lilies and roses of Sharon to heaven. But a large part finds its way to the other side of the terrace, and descends down, down, below Mount Zion, through the dark valley of Tophet, type of hell, the Valley of Hinnom—valley of fire, as it is called—to the Dead Sea, where it brings forth the apples of Sodom, and is lost, lost forever, in the bitter waters of the Sea of Death. This terrace is the *Terrace of Indecision*. — *Scrap-Book*.

II. **Pilate's injustice.** I tell thee, there is nothing else but justice; one strong thing I find here below, — the just thing, — the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich marching at thy back in support of an unjust thing, and infinite bonfires visibly awaiting ahead of thee to blaze centuries to come for thy victory on behalf of it, I would advise thee to call "Halt!" to fling down thy *baton*, and say, "In God's name, no!" What will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded, though

bonfires blazed from north to south, and bells rang, editors wrote leading articles, and the just thing lay trampled out of sight to all mortal eyes, an abolished and annihilated thing. *Carlyle.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver 2. It seemed absurd that one in Christ's position should claim to be King of the Jews; but he was King. So often it is with right, justice, truth, reforms.
2. Ver. 23. The threefold silence of Christ a testimony, (1) to the eternal discourse of his life, which refuted by its good works every charge against him; (2) to the weakness of his enemies' replies; (3) to his certainty of a different judgment from God. — *Anon.*
3. Vers. 6-10. Every one of us must choose between Christ and the world.
4. Those who reject Christ, do it contrary to reason and to right.
5. Pilate had, as every sinner has, many warnings from conscience, from friends, from Christ, against his course of sin.
6. He who fails to prevent a sin, having the power to do so, sanctions its commission. — *Seneca.*
7. To each one there comes the Pilate's hour, in which he must make his decision, either for or against Christ. — *R. Besser.*
8. We cannot throw upon others the blame for our own sins, no matter how much they may tempt us.
9. To choose Christ is to choose heaven, righteousness, truth, love, happiness, God.
10. To choose the world is to choose pleasure, and sin, defeat, sorrow, remorse, death.
11. Ver. 13. They that cry "Crucify," shall be crucified; they that wrong, shall be wronged; they that persecute, shall suffer persecution.
12. Ver. 15. Wrong-doing to please the people is always a failure.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The practical subject of this lesson is, WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH JESUS? (1) Describe the *Trial of Jesus before Pilate* (vers. 1-5); the order of events; the accusation; the innocence of Jesus; his silence; Pilate's efforts to release him. (2) *Jesus, or Barabbas* (vers. 6-11.) This is still the choice which men must make. The motives of the people in choosing. Men now reject Jesus against their reason, and sense of right. Warnings. (3) *What shall we do with Jesus?* (vers. 12-15.) What the people did; what Pilate did; his motives; his efforts to escape deciding. What will we do with Jesus? What can we do *without* him?

LESSON VIII. — NOVEMBER 19.

JESUS MOCKED AND CRUCIFIED. — MARK 15:16-26.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *They pierced my hands and my feet.* — Ps. 22:16.

TIME. — Friday, April 7, A. D. 30, about nine o'clock in the morning.

PLACE. — Jerusalem. The mockery took place either at Herod's palace, in the northern part of Zion, where Pilate was holding court, or at the Tower of Antonia; the crucifixion on Calvary, on the north-west of the city, just outside the walls.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cesar, emperor of Roman Empire; Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea; Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 27:27-37. John 19:2, 3, 16-24. The mocking of the soldiers not found in Luke. The crucifixion is found in Luke 23:26-34, 38.

INTRODUCTION.

Jesus, in our last lesson, was scourged by Pilate's servants, and handed over to the soldiers to be crucified. This sentence of condemnation was pronounced in public, outside the judgment-hall. The soldiers, instead of taking him immediately to the place of crucifixion, brought him into the court of the palace, where their barracks were, and made mocking sport of his claims.

16. ¹ And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

And the soldiers led him 16 away within the court, which is the Pretorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it on him; .

¹ Matt. 27 : 27.

EXPLANATORY.

I. Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers. — Vers. 16-19. **16. And the soldiers.** The Roman soldiers, into whose hands our Lord was committed for execution. **Led him away into the hall (court).** He had been scourged in the open grounds before the palace gate, close to the tribunal, but was now led, still half-naked, with painful, bleeding steps, into the inner court of the palace, in which, as the trial was over, the whole cohort — no longer needed outside — was massed, to be ready for any attempt at rescue. — *Geikie*. **Pretorium.** The courtyard, or part of the palace where the pretorian (governor's) guards were stationed. — *Robinson*. Pilate when in Jerusalem probably lived in the former palace of Herod, on the northern brow of Zion, overlooking the temple, and connected with it by a bridge. — *Schaff*. Also connected with the three towers Hippicus, Phasaël, and Mariamne, on the northern wall of Zion. It was a magnificent building of white marble, with which the temple itself, says Josephus, bore no comparison. **They call together.** The rough, brutal fellows, accustomed to gladiatorial shows and other savageries, wanted to get some sport out of their Hebrew prisoner. — *Morison*. **The whole band.** The band, or cohort, was the tenth part of a legion, embracing from three to six hundred men; but here probably only that portion of the band or cohort which was then actually on service. — *Abbott*.

17. Clothed him with purple. Previous to the scourging, all his clothes had been pulled off. They accordingly put on his undergarments again; and instead of the upper robes they arrayed him in the ordinary military cloak, for the purpose of ridiculing his pretensions to the dignity of King. — *Meyer*. **Purple.** St. Matthew, "a scarlet robe." Words of color, and specially "purple," are generally indefinite, even in classical writers. There can be no doubt that the vestment, the red cloak of the soldiers, was intended to represent the purple robe of royalty. — *Cook*. The imperial robe was always called "the purple," whatever the variations in its color; as a *white pink* means a white flower of the pink species (*Stock*), or as we say a red blackberry. **And platted a crown of thorns.** The thorns were most likely twigs of the commonest thorn-bush in Palestine, growing everywhere on waste ground, and ready at hand. The branches are long, slender, and very thorny, though the thorns are far apart; so that it was well suited to the purpose of the Roman soldiers. — *Malan in Morison*. Hasselquist, a Swedish naturalist, supposes a very common plant, *naba* or *nubka* of the Arabs, with many small and sharp spines; soft, round, and pliant branches; leaves much resembling ivy, of a very deep green, as if in designed mockery of a victor's wreath. — *Alford*.



CROWN OF THORNS.

Put it about his head. This would wound as well as mock him, though the latter was the chief design. — *Schaff*. What crown could have been imagined for our King Jesus which should have so exactly suited him as this *crown of thorns*? He who came to obtain for us the blessing, bears what the curse-laden earth brings forth, being made a curse for us. The thorns might with justice have been turned into instruments of our torture, for they are emblems of our earthly lusts and cares, growing and flourishing in our heart, and choking there so many noble grains of seed; but now they torture him — and to us the crown of glory is given, the crown of life and righteousness. — *R. Besser*. Every one of our sins is a *thorn* to him. — *Bishop Hall*. Matt. 27 : 29, says they put a reed in his hand as a mock sceptre. Even in the midst of the mockery the truth made itself felt. Herod recognizes his innocence by a white robe, the Roman soldiery his royalty by the sceptre and crown of thorns; and that has become the highest of all crowns. — *Cook*.

18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19. And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21. ¹ And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

and they began to salute him, 18 Hail, King of the Jews! And 19 they smote his head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they 20 had mocked him, they took off from him the purple, and put on him his garments. And they lead him out to crucify him.

And they compel one pass- 21 ing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that

¹ Matt. 27: 32. Luke 23: 26.

18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! *Hail*, an ancient form of saluting such as we honor or respect, which signifies as much as, *All health to you!* — *Petter*. The salutation would be the more derisive, that the word rendered *hail* literally means *rejoice*. — *Morison*. He had said, "*I am a King*;" therefore the soldiers of the governor now began to mock his royalty, just as the servants of Caiaphas had before derided him as prophet. — *R. Besser*. In that vast hall some hundreds of soldiers passed in procession before him, each kneeling, each in mockery saluting him as King of the Jews. — *Cook*.

19. Smote him on the head. But they tire of mock homage: the demon spirit that is in them inspires the merriment with a savage cruelty; and so they snatch the reed out of his hand, and smite with it the crown of thorns, and drive it down upon his pierced and bleeding brow, and smite him with their hands. — *Hanna*. The blows are the mock presents that the subjects bring. They approach Jesus with lowliness and with a "Hail," and then, as if laying their offerings at his feet, they strike him. The picture of humiliation is drawn in striking colors, and its *advance* upon the preceding scenes must be obvious to every reader. — *Schaff*. Spit upon him. As their excitement increased, they spat upon him, following the example of the chief priests (Mark 14: 65). — *Cook*. It is remarkable that during the whole of this treatment Christ offered no resistance, and uttered no word, — he who with a glance of his eye could have scathed them into ashes. — *Thomas*. Not one member of the Lord's only, but his whole body, had to suffer the most cruel torture: his head was wounded by the crown of thorns, by smiting with the reed; his face suffered spitting, and cuffs with the hand; his whole body was mangled with scourging; it was stripped, it was covered with a cloak of scorn; his hands held the reed; and afterward his tongue was forced to taste vinegar and gall. Because in all our members sin dwells and works, therefore has Christ willed for our sins to suffer in all his members. — *Chrysostom*. As the death of Jesus was designed to atone for all guilt, nearly all guilt combined to accomplish it. It was covetousness that betrayed him; it was perjury that bore false witness against him; it was envy that delivered him up; cruelty scourged and crowned him with thorns; popular fickleness chose Barabbas, and rejected him; while, in the soldiers, coarse brutality buffeted and mocked him. — *Angus*.

At this point we have to insert the account which St. John gives (19: 4, 5) of Pilate's last attempt to rescue the "just Man" whom he had unjustly condemned. He showed the silent Sufferer in the mock insignia of royalty, as if asking them, Is not this enough? The cries of "Crucify him!" were but redoubled; and once again the cowardly judge took his place in the official chair, and passed the final sentence. — *Plumptre*.

II. The Crucifixion. — Vers. 21-26. 20. Put his own clothes on him. He was thus mocked, not in his own clothes, but in another's, to signify that he suffered not for his own sin. — *M. Henry*. Led him out. That is, from the city; the place of execution was without the city walls (Heb. 13: 12). This was customary among the Jews (Num. 15: 35. 1 Kings 21: 13. Acts 7: 58), and also among the Romans. — *Abbott*. The Epistle to the Hebrews (13: 11, 12) teaches that he suffered without the walls as the fulfilment of the sin-offering, in which the bodies of the beasts offered were burned without the camp (Lev. 16: 27).

21. They compel. The Roman officer had official authority to press into the military service, for a special purpose, either horses or men. See Matt. 5: 41. — *Abbott*. Simon a Cyrenian. There were many Simons, or Simeons, among the early Christians; but this one was distinguished from all the rest as Simon of Cyrene, a great and flourishing city of North Africa. It lay between Alexandria on the east, and Carthage on the west. In virtue of a charter of Ptolemy I. it had become a favorite resort of the Jews. It is now a heap

22. ⁸ And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23. ¹ And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

24. And when they had crucified him, ² they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

he might bear his cross. And ²² they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they offered him wine ²³ mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. And they ²⁴ crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each

¹ Matt. 27: 33. Luke 23: 33. John 19: 17. ² Matt. 27: 34. ³ Ps. 22: 18. Luke 23: 34. John 19: 23.

of ruins. — *Morison*. Probably he was met just as they were going out of the city gate, and he was entering in (Matt. 27: 32). The reason for his selection may simply have been that he chanced to be close at hand when Jesus sank from weariness. — *Andrews*. Besides, he was a foreigner, and defenceless, and may have shown some sympathy with Jesus. The crowd of Jews would not help on account of the infamy attached to it. Coming out of the country. Going up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover. Alexander and Rufus. It is taken for granted that they were well known at the time when the Gospel was written, and hence, doubtless, they were Christians of some note in the Church. Bear his cross. Jesus at first bore his own cross (John 19: 17), as was customary. Tradition says that our Lord sunk to the ground beneath the load; but the more exact expression of Luke (23: 26) shows that the after-part of the cross alone, which usually dragged upon the ground, was put upon Simon. — *Schaff*. Here, as always, the Saviour bears the heaviest part of the burden, while the lightest part rests on the shoulders of him who follows after Christ. — *Lange*.

Another incident in that sad journey will be found in Luke 23: 27-31, with Christ's words to the women of Jerusalem who followed him, weeping. We must not forget that "there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death" (Luke 23: 32).

22. Golgotha. A Hebrew word, meaning a skull. From its Latin equivalent, *calvaria*, comes our English word Calvary, which occurs in the English New Testament only in Luke 23: 33, where it should be translated "a skull." The significance of the name is uncertain. Some suppose that it was the common place of execution, and that the skulls of those who were executed lay about; others that it was a bare rounded knoll, in form like a skull. — *Abbott*. It was, (1) apparently a well-known spot; (2) outside the gate (compare Heb. 13: 12); but (3) near the city (John 19: 20); (4) on a thoroughfare leading into the country (Luke 23: 26); and (5) contained a "garden" or "orchard" (John 19: 41). — *Maclear*. Tradition has for sixteen centuries pointed out the site of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the actual spot; but it is highly probable that this spot was *inside* the city wall at that time. The question is of little practical importance; for the Apostles and Evangelists barely allude to the *place* of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. They fixed their eyes on the great facts themselves, and worshipped the exalted Saviour in heaven where he forever lives. — *Schaff*. It is far better for the purity of the Christian religion that this be so, lest such places be regarded as special means of holiness, when all true holiness is spiritual in the heart. — *P*. There is a curious tradition that Adam was buried where the second Adam died and rose again. — *Schaff*.

23. Gave him to drink. The Talmud of Jerusalem relates that before crucifixion there was offered to the prisoner a stupefying draught, which compassionate people, usually ladies, of Jerusalem, prepared at their own cost. — *Godet*. There was at Jerusalem a sisterhood, which had this as its chief object. The drink may have been provided by the women referred to in Luke 23: 27. Wine mingled with myrrh. Matthew says, *mingled with gall*. As the wine used by the soldiers was a cheap, sour wine, little, if at all, superior to vinegar; and as myrrh, gall, and other bitter substances are put for the whole class, — there is really no difference in these passages. — *Alexander*. The narcotic was mixed with the sour wine of the country and with myrrh to make it drinkable. It may have been hemlock, or even poppy-juice, but there are no materials for deciding. See Prov. 31: 6. — *Plumptre*. The effect of the draught was to dull the nerves, to cloud the intellect, to provide an anæsthetic against some part, at least, of the lingering agonies of that dreadful death. He received it not. The "tasting" (Matt. 27: 34) implied a recognition of the kindly purpose of the act, but a recognition only. In the refusal to do more than taste, we trace the resolute purpose to drink the cup which his Father had given him to the last drop, and not to dull, either the sense of suffering nor the clearness of his communion with his Father with the slumberous potion. — *Ellicott*.

24. And when they had crucified him. That is, *affixed him to the cross*. This passage describes the central fact of the world's history. — *Schaff*. Crucified him. (1) *The*

25. And ¹it was the third hour, and they crucified him. | should take. And it was the 25
third hour, and they crucified

¹ Matt. 27:45. Luke 23:44. John 19:14.

cross. There were three forms of crosses: the first in the shape of the letter X, called the *crux decussata*, or, later, St. Andrew's cross; one in the form of the letter T, called the *crux commissa*, or, later, St. Anthony's cross; and third, the Latin cross, or *crux immissa*, **†**, like the preceding one, except that the upright beam projected above the horizontal one. That the Latin cross was the one on which Jesus was crucified, is indicated by uniform tradition, and by the fact that the inscription was placed upon it over his head. — *Abbott.* (2) *Crucifixion.* He was stripped naked of all his clothes. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then



CROSSES.

through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. To prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not "rest upon nothing but four great wounds," there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. And then the accursed tree, with its living human burden hanging upon it in helpless agony, and suffering fresh tortures as every movement irritated the fresh rents in hands and feet, was slowly heaved up by strong arms, and the end of it fixed firmly in a hole dug deep in the ground for that purpose. — *Farrar.* The body was terribly wrenched when the cross was raised and dropped into its place: the concussion often dislocated the limbs. — *Abbott.* The feet of the sufferer were only a foot or two above the ground, — a fact of some weight, as showing that Jesus suffered in the midst of his persecutors, and not looking down from above their heads. — *Schaff.* Inflammation of the wounds in both hands and feet speedily set in, and ere long rose also in other places where the circulation was checked by the tension of the parts; intolerable thirst and ever increasing pain resulted; the blood, which could no longer reach the extremities, rose to the head, swelling the veins and arteries in it unnaturally, and causing the most agonizing tortures in the brain; besides, it could no longer move freely from the lungs; the heart grew more and more oppressed, and all the veins were distended. Had the wounds bled freely it would have been a great relief, but there was very little lost. The weight of the body itself, resting on the wooden pin of the upright beam, the burning heat of the sun, scorching the veins, and the hot wind which dried up the moisture of the body, made each moment more terrible than that before. The numbness and stiffness of the more distant muscles brought on painful convulsions; and this numbness, slowly extending, sometimes through two or three days, at last reached the vital parts, and released the sufferer by death. — *Geikie.* Each terrible detail must be noted in order to understand the kind and amount of the suffering inflicted by this the most savage and brutal of all punishments, combining every form of bodily suffering, borne with full living consciousness by incarnate Love. — *Cook.* **Parted his garments.** Perfectly naked did the crucified One hang upon the cross, and the garments became the property of the Roman soldiers, after Roman usage. — *Lange.* The execution was carried out, and the cross watched, by a guard of four soldiers, with a centurion; and the garments of the sufferers were their perquisite. Four parts being made, there remained the upper robe, woven throughout with a seam, the type of Christ's perfect righteousness, and the source of healing to many who had touched it. As it would have been spoiled by dividing it, the soldiers decided to cast lots for it, thus fulfilling another prophecy (Ps. 22:18). This has given occasion to the remark that Christians have, in their party divisions, paid less respect to their Master than the heathen soldiers did. — *Smith.*

25. **It was the third hour.** John says, *about* the sixth hour. But there is no discrepancy; for, (1) there were no exact divisions of time, as with us, known to the ancients. (2) Mark may speak of the beginning of the crucifixion, and John of the hour when it was completed. (3) John says only *about* the sixth hour: it was in that vicinity. (4) The third hour may refer to the division of the day, beginning with the third hour or nine o'clock, and lasting till twelve. The crucifixion took place between nine and twelve o'clock: probably it was begun near nine o'clock.

26. And ¹the superscription of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

him. And the superscription ²⁶ of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

¹ Matt. 27 : 37. John 19 : 19.

26. The superscription. It was the Roman custom to place on the cross over the criminal's head, a *titulus*, or placard, stating the crime for which he suffered. Luke (23 : 38) says that the title was written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, the chief languages then spoken, and all spectators would be able to read it. The superscription is given differently by each Evangelist. *This is Jesus the King of the Jews* (Matt. 27 : 37). *The King of the Jews* (Mark 15 : 26). *This is the King of the Jews* (Luke 23 : 38). *Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews* (John 19 : 19). Although no serious and sensible writer would dream of talking about "a discrepancy" here, it is very probable that the differences arise from the different forms assumed by the title in the three languages. We may then assume that the title over the cross was as follows:—

JOHN :	MARK :	LUKE :
ישו הנצרי מלך היהודים	Ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων	Rex Judaeorum hic est.

— *Cambridge Bible.*

Pilate displayed the Lord's title on the cross in Latin, the language of Roman power; in Greek, the language of the world's best culture; and in Hebrew, the language of the Jew. Thus to power, to culture, and to piety, was the sovereignty of Jesus declared, and it is still declared by means of such language. Power, culture, and piety, in their noblest forms, pay homage at the feet of Jesus. — *J. R. Vincent, D.D.* The *Roman*, powerful but not happy; the *Greek*, distracted with the inquiries of an unsatisfying philosophy; the *Jew*, bound hand and foot with a chain of ceremonial law, all are together round the cross. *Christ* is crucified in the midst of them, — crucified for all. The "superscription of his accusation" speaks to all the same language, of peace, pardon, and love. — *Howson.* Greek, Latin, and Hebrew — to witness Christ to be the King of the Jews — do each of them avouch this singular axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour. — *T. Brooks.* **The King of the Jews.** That was the crime of which our Saviour had been guilty! The procurator would intend that the inscription should have a sting in it for the chief priests and elders and scribes. He had been frustrated and galled; and he took his revenge by flashing the idea before the public mind, that it was a crime, in the estimation of at least the chief priests and scribes and elders, to seek to have a Jewish king. — *Morison.* Pilate's shaft did not miss his mark. The chief priests wished him to amend the description thus: "*He said, I am King of the Jews;*" but he silenced them with the answer, "*What I have written I have written*" (John 19 : 21, 22). — *Smith.* And thus amid the conflicting passions of men was proclaimed, in the chief tongues of mankind, from the cross itself, and in circumstances which threw upon it a lurid yet grand light, the truth which drew the Magi to his manger, and will yet be owned by all the world! — *J. F. and B.* And it was through the crucifixion that Jesus became King, and founded his kingdom, and drew the hearts of men to be his loyal subjects.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

For order of events, and location of Pilate's Hall and Calvary, see Andrews's *Life of Christ*, pp. 528-539, 559. For elaborate descriptions of crucifixion, see Farrar's *Life of Christ*, chap. 61, and Geikie, chap. 61-63. Robinson's *Biblical Researches*. H. Belfrage's *Sacred Discourses*: "Christ's Kingly Glory ridiculed." Stock's *Lessons on the Life of our Lord*, 258-264. *Sermons* by H. W. Beecher, series 1, "Crowned Suffering."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The disguised King. Both nature and history are full of illustrations of greatness and goodness in disguise. Who would ever expect, had they not seen it, that the majestic oak was hidden in the acorn, or exquisitely lovely flowers in the black seeds thrust under ground, or that the diamond was in the charcoal? Most great reforms have begun amid mockery, being despised and rejected of men, and crowned with thorns. Like young Theseus, son of Egeus king of Athens, they were not known at first as sons of the great king, till they had grown able to lift away the rock which concealed the arms and proofs of their royal parentage. Witness the Methodists, the Puritans, the Reformation, Christianity itself. — *P.*

II. Bunker-hill Monument commemorates a defeat, which for a long time was looked

upon with chagrin and disappointment; and yet that defeat was really the birth-throe of our country, and had more glorious results and more wide-reaching influence than most victories.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 16-20. The best and most heavenly persons and truths are sometimes despised and crowned with thorns.

2. Think of the love of Him who endured these things from those he came to save, and when he had the power to destroy them in a moment if he would.

3. While thou pourest down thy drunken carouses, thou givest thy Saviour a portion of *gall*; while thou despisest his poor servants, thou *spitest in his face*; while thou putttest on thy proud dresses, and liftest up thy vain heart with high conceits, thou *settest a crown of thorns on his head*; while thou wringest and oppressest his poor children, thou *whippest him* and drawest blood from his hands and feet. — *Bishop Hall*.

4. Every part of Christ's body was tortured, as every part of our bodies have sinned.

5. Ver. 21. We must bear the cross of Christ; but he always bears it with us, and the heaviest end.

6. Ver. 22. Golgotha. "Think how this place of horrors becomes transformed into the hill from whence comest our help."

7. Ver. 23. Christ would shrink from none of the sufferings God laid upon him.

8. Ver. 24. Bad men often unconsciously fulfil the word and will of God.

9. The parted garments are an emblem of the Church in its universality, to be sent out into the four quarters of the globe; the unparted garment is emblematic of the Church in its unity, to be kept whole and unparted; the gambling soldiers are an emblem of those who treat the unity of the Church of Christ as a matter of indifference. — *Wordsworth*.

10. Ver. 25. Christ crucified shows, (1) the evil of sin; (2) the greatness of our danger; (3) the value of salvation; (4) the wonderful love of God; (5) it strengthens every motive for being good; (6) it is the culmination of our perfect example.

11. Ver. 26. The title in three languages teaches, (1) that Christ died for all men; (2) for all the wants of men; (3) all language, all history, all culture, are to be laid at the feet of Jesus as King; (4) here is a prophecy of Christ's universal kingdom.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

This lesson and the next are closely connected. In this lesson it may be well to look at the crucifixion from the world side, — THE WORLD ILL-TREATING ITS SAVIOUR; and next sabbath consider the atonement. (1) *The mockery* (vers. 16-20). Warn scholars against ridiculing others, especially those who are trying to be better. If ridiculed, bear it as Christ did. (2) *The crucifixion* (vers. 21-26). Showing the guilt and punishment of sin to require so great pain in saving from it. The title as a prophecy of Christ as King.

LESSON IX. — NOVEMBER 26.

HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS. — MARK 15:27-37.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* —

I PET. 2:24.

TIME. — Friday, April 7, A. D. 30. From 9 A.M. till 3 P.M.

PLACE. — Calvary (Golgotha), just outside the city of Jerusalem, on the north-west.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 27:39-50. Luke 23:33-46. John 19:25-30.

SCENES DURING THE CRUCIFIXION. — Christ spoke seven times during his crucifixion, what are called "The Seven Words from the Cross." Bengel says, "There are seven words in the four Evangelists, all of which not one has recorded. Whence it is plain that these books are, as it were, four voices which produce symphony when heard together."

1. *The first word from the cross*, spoken while they were affixing him to the cross, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

2. Mockeries, by soldiers, priests, and the crowd, continued till noon, when the darkness came.

3. Conversion of the robber, toward noon (Luke 23:38-43).

4. *The second word*, to the penitent robber, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

5. *The third word*, committing his mother to John, "Woman, behold thy son," etc. (John 19: 26-27).
6. Darkness over all the land for three hours, — and silence.
7. *The fourth word*, toward the close of the darkness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15: 34).
8. *The fifth word*, "I thirst" (John 19: 28).
9. A spectator prepares the sour wine which was at hand, but others call on him to wait and see if Elijah would come to his help (Matt. 27: 49). However, he gives Jesus the drink, adding, "Let alone; now we will wait for Elijah" (Mark 15: 36).
10. *The sixth word*, "It is finished" (John 19: 30).
11. *The seventh word*, three o'clock P.M., "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23: 46).

27. And ¹with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, ²And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29. And ³they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, ⁴thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

And with him they crucify 27 two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and

¹ Matt. 27: 38. ² Isa. 53: 12. Luke 22: 37. ³ Ps. 22: 7. ⁴ Mark 14: 58. John 2: 19.

EXPLANATORY.

I. **The Mockery around the Cross.**—Vers. 27-32. 27. With him they crucify two thieves. Rather, robbers; in all probability partners in the crime of Barabbas. The mountain robbers, or banditti, were always ready to take part in such desperate risings against the Roman power. — *Cambridge Bible*. Thus he touched life at its lowest point, plunged into the stream of humanity where it was blackest. But one of those criminals he lifted up to glory eternal. What an illustration of Christ's mission! He came down among the guilty, that he might raise them up to be heirs of God. — *Sunday-school Times*. One on his right hand, and the other on his left. The three crosses which stood together on Mount Calvary are a continual emblem of our world. A dying Saviour had on one side of him an enemy and unbeliever, and on the other side a friend and believer. Thus it is to-day in every part of the globe where Christ is preached; thus it is in every Christian congregation; thus in almost every household. — *Nehemiah Adams*.

28. The Scripture was fulfilled. This verse (a quotation from Isa. 53: 12) is omitted by the oldest manuscripts, and rejected by the latest critics (as in the New Version). In Luke (22: 37) its genuineness is undoubted. — *Schaff*.

29. They that passed by. The people going in and out of the city, on the thoroughfare near the place of crucifixion. — *Clark*. The words bring before us the picture of a lounging crowd, strolling from one cross to the other, and mocking the central sufferer of the three. — *Plumptre*. Railed on him; literally, "blasphemed." They heaped vile epithets upon him. — *Jacobus*. Wagging their heads. Derisively and insultingly. (Compare 2 Kings 19: 21. Job 16: 4. Ps. 109: 25.) — *Morison*. Ah! The interjection, which in its Greek form (*wa*) expresses a kind of inarticulate scorn, is peculiar to St. Mark, and may be noted as another instance of his habit of reproducing the very sounds that had been uttered. — *Plumptre*. The exclamation expresses here the bitterest irony and scorn. — *Morison*. Thou that destroyest the temple. It is evident that our Lord's saying (John 2: 19-21), or rather this *perversion* of it (for he claimed not to *destroy* but to *rebuild* the temple destroyed by them), had greatly exasperated the feelings which the priests and Pharisees had contrived to excite against him. It is referred to as the principal fact brought out in evidence against him on the trial (Matt. 26: 61; cf. Acts 6: 13, 14), as an offence for which he deserved to suffer. And it is very remarkable that now, *while it was receiving its real fulfilment*, it should be made more public and more impressive by the insulting proclamation of his enemies. Hence the importance attached to it after the resurrection (John 2: 22). — *Webster and Wilkinson*. This taunt, like many of the objections brought against Christianity, arose from a misapprehension of what really was said: the words as spoken were in the course of rapid fulfilment. On this eventful day they had destroyed that of which the temple was a shadow, to be as surely, on the third day, raised up again in resurrection glory. — *Mimpriss*.

30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31. Likewise also, the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And ¹they that were crucified with him reviled him.

buildst it in three days, save 30
thyself, and come down from
the cross. In like manner also 31
the chief priests mocking *him*
among themselves with the
scribes said, He saved others;
himself he cannot save. Let 32
the Christ, the King of Israel,
now come down from the
cross, that we may see and
believe. And *they* that were
crucified with him reproached
him.

¹ Matt. 27 : 44. Luke 23 : 39.

30. **Save thyself.** Connected with the preceding verse: "Thou who possessest this power, save thyself." If you can destroy and rebuild the temple so easily, surely you can come down from the cross. He who refused to come down from the cross came up from the grave, and it was a greater matter to destroy death by rising than to save life by descending. — *Gregory. Demands of sinners not complied with:* (1) Because compliance with them would defeat the Divine plan of redemption; (2) because they themselves create the difficulties which they claim to have removed; (3) because sufficient evidence of the importance of religion has been already given; (4) because you have not yet improved what God has already done in your behalf; (5) because demands already acceded to have not been improved; (6) because in the very act of making them you admit what justifies your condemnation; (7) because by them you lay the blame of your continued impenitence on God. — *Biblical Museum.*

31. The chief priests mocking said. The language is differently reported by the several Evangelists. The mockery was probably continued for some time, and would vary in form. — *Schaff.* Among the sufferings of our Lord, mockings held a conspicuous place. Four times, in the course of a few hours, he was publicly mocked. How different from this scene on earth is that now witnessed in heaven, where beings of all orders join in one song of adoration! — *Tyng.* It has often been the same with God's people and his cause, — mocked by men, but glorified at last. **He saved others.** This may be ironical, or it is a recognition of his miracles of mercy, to taunt him with a supposed loss of power just when he needed it most for himself. His very mercy is used in mockery. — *Schaff.* — If all whom he had saved from eternal death had appeared to bear testimony to his power, what a glorious company would have covered Calvary! They *will* appear on a future day, together with multitudes *then* and even now unborn: they will declare with one voice, "He saved *us*." It was himself alone that he was not willing to save, because he knew that *if* he saved himself he could save no other. Had he come down from the cross, then we could never come up from the grave. Love fixed him to the place of torture. — *Tyng.*

32. Let Christ the King of Israel. The language is that of taunt, and refers to the inscription upon the cross; and its object was, perhaps, in part, to turn the edge of its sarcasm against the nation. — *Abbott.* Descend from the cross, that we may believe. Men who hate the gospel are always proposing some test of its value, on which they would give it their confidence; but if that test were fairly met they would be all the more bitter in hostility to it, because of its new triumph. If Jesus had come down from the cross, the chief priests would have seen to it that he was fastened on again more securely than at first. Did it remove their hostility to him when he rose from the dead? Were they any readier to believe in him then? No, no. Whatever else keeps men from believing the gospel, it is not any lack of notable wonders wrought through its power. Whatever else might bring them to give it their confidence, there would be no gain in any fresh or greater miracles in its behalf. The trouble is, that men don't want to believe in Jesus; and they will always have a new excuse for refusing credence to every new proof of his supremacy. — *Dr. Robinson in Sunday-school Times.* To promise ourselves that we would believe if we had such means and motives of faith as we ourselves would prescribe, when we do not improve what God has appointed, is not only a gross instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts, but the sorry subterfuge of an obstinate, destroying infidelity. — *Henry.* So all the voices about him rang with blasphemy and spite; and in that long, slow agony his dying ear caught no accent of gratitude, of pity, or of love. Baseness, falsehood, savagery, stupidity, — such were the characteristics of the world which thrust itself into hideous prominence before the Saviour's last consciousness; such the muddy and miserable stream that rolled under the cross before his dying eyes. — *Farrar.* They that were crucified with him reviled him. This is an apparent contradiction of Luke 23:39. Some explain it that both malefactors at first joined in the reviling, but soon ceased. Others, and more probably they are right, explain that Mark uses the plural in a more general way, as we often

33. And ² when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ³ Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And when the sixth hour 33 was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth 34 hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why

¹ Matt. 27 : 45. Luke 23 : 44. ² Ps. 22 : 1. Matt. 27 : 46.

speak, while really one only reviled. Luke (23 : 39-43) gives the account of the conversion of one of the malefactors. It is more than probable that he had heard Jesus before this, and knew something of his wondrous words and works. "Perhaps he was convicted by the very meekness and the unruffled self-control and self-abnegation that were manifested in the manner in which our Lord endured their insults."—*Morison*. To this malefactor, at this time, was spoken the *second word from the cross*. Soon after this, toward noon, Jesus committed his widowed mother to the care of the beloved disciple (John 19 : 25-27), and spoke the *third word from the cross*.

II. The Darkness.—Ver. 33. 33. The sixth hour; i.e., noon. The crucifixion began about nine o'clock in the morning. There was darkness; or, "a darkness came." Early Christian writers speak of this, and appeal to heathen testimony in support of the fact. An eclipse is out of the question, for the moon was full. An earthquake followed (Matt. 27 : 51), but the darkness which precedes an earthquake is not so long or extended. This was supernatural; for since our Lord showed supernatural power in his life, his death, in view of its purpose, might well be attended with such events. It has been supposed to signify the mourning of nature, but it also stands connected with the hiding of God's face.—*Riddle*. This darkness lasted three hours; whether it was total, as at night, or only a thick gloom, it is impossible to tell. The period of outward darkness no doubt coincided with that of Christ's mental agony and sense of desertion. The anguish of Gethsemane returned upon him with augmented power, and lasted during that time, until it culminated in the profoundly mysterious cry in which, for the only recorded time, Jesus speaks to the Father as "My God," and not as Father.—*Stock*. Amidst the gloom, we may suppose, the mocking around the cross had ceased.—*Clark*. Over the whole land. Probably of Judea; yet it seems to have extended to other lands, having been noticed in Egypt we are told. Until the ninth hour; three o'clock. The darkness continued during the part of the day usually the brightest.—*Riddle*. As the darkness commenced at the sixth hour, the second of the Jewish hours of prayer, so it continued till the ninth hour, the hour of the evening sacrifice, increasing, probably, in depth, and reaching its deepest gloom at the moment of this mysterious cry, when the flame of the one great "evening sacrifice" was burning fiercest.—*D. Brown*.

III. The Closing Scenes.—Vers. 34-37. 34. Jesus cried with a loud voice. Literally, a great voice; i.e., with the voice still strong, unweakened by approaching death. Up to the last moment there was no sign of weakness, no decay of power or vitality.—*Abbott*. Elōī, Elōī, lā'mā, sabbāch'thānī. These words are Aramaic (Syro-Chaldaic), the common dialect of the people, a translation of the Hebrew (given in Matthew) of the first words of the twenty-second psalm. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (The fourth word from the cross.) This language cannot be accounted for by physical causes alone. Only the burden of sin, borne in the place of others, could create the feeling which thus found expression.—*Abbott*. This cry refers to one utterly broken down for a time in a wretchedness beyond our conception. It was not mere death, which many a martyr has viewed without dismay, but the bearing of the sin of the world. All the inner horror of sin is revealed to him. Sin in its nakedness is more horrible than death. These words belong to Christ as burdened with the sins of the world. They express the complete separation which sin makes between man and God. He is the Advocate of all mankind, and their separation from God because of sin extends itself to him for a season.—*Archbishop Thompson*. I. The extraordinary extent of the suffering Jesus was enduring is indicated in the word "forsaken." He does not inquire why he is pained with such excruciating agony, but why he is forsaken. II. Much emphasis—I think the chief emphasis—must be understood to fall upon that word "thou." He could endure the neglect of others, but that his God should forsake him! III. Once more, connect "me" with the "thou,"—me, thy well-beloved and faithful Son. IV. The finest thing in all this dear history of Immanuel on the earth is exhibited just here. When he began his suffering on the cross, he said, "Father;" and when he reached its end he also said "Father;" but in the deep midnight of woe between them, he says, "My God, my God!" V. Reasons for the forsaking: one is, God rejects and hates sin, and sin was then laid on Jesus. Again, perhaps

35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36. And ¹ one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37. ² And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

hast thou forsaken me? And 35 some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And 36 one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down. And Jesus uttered 37 a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

¹ Matt. 27 : 48. John 19 : 29. ² Matt. 27 : 50. Luke 23 : 46. John 19 : 30.

the almighty Father meant that Jesus should now fight the battle single-handed, in order that the glory of the final victory to be gained might be his own. VI. A single reflection crowds upon our minds. If God hates sin so much, that, in order to reach and punish it, he struck the dart of pain and death into the heart of his only Son, who can hope he shall be able to stand? — *Condensed from Dr. Robinson in Sunday-school Times.* Consider the following facts: (1) Jesus is represented in the New Testament as subject to the whole experience of spiritual conflict which belongs to man. (2) He is represented in the prophets (Isa. 53 : 5, 6) and the Epistles (2 Cor. 5 : 21. Gal. 3 : 13. 1 Pet. 2 : 24) as taking upon himself the penalty of our sins, represented throughout the Bible as spiritual separation from God (Deut. 32 : 20. Isa. 64 : 7. 2 Thess. 1 : 9). (3) Some help toward an understanding of this cry may be derived from that phase of Christian experience in which, while the intellect still holds fast to its belief in God, the heart *feels* his presence no more, and the soul is in darkness, in spite of its faith in God (compare Matt. 11 : 1-6. Exod. 17 : 4. 1 Kings 19 : 10. Ps. 10 : 1. Jer. 12 : 1, 2). (4) That there was an inward conflict in Christ's soul, is indicated by the twofold nature of the cry: "*My God*" indicates an unrelaxed hold on him; "*forsoaken me*" indicates a sense of bereavement of the divine presence. If these are inconsistent, the inconsistency repeats itself frequently in Christian experience. (5) It is the cry of innocence: the lost know that they are forsaken, but know *why*, and do not call on God as *their* God. It was, therefore, *no literal transfer* of the experience of remorse and spiritual death which Christ experienced. — *Abbott.*

35. He calleth Elias (Elijah). The resemblance between the word "Eli" and the name Elijah is very close in the original. There is here an allusion to the belief that Elijah would come before the Messiah, and hence a sarcastic denial of his Messiahship. — *Schaff.* The words may have been imperfectly understood. — *Ellicott.*

36. One ran and filled a sponge. This was occasioned by our Lord's cry, "I thirst" (John 19 : 28), (the fifth word from the cross). Full of vinegar. This was the sour wine used by the soldiers; not mixed with myrrh, as in the case of the stupefying draught Jesus had refused before crucifixion (ver. 34). — *Riddle.* The sponge had probably served instead of a cork to the jar in which the soldiers had brought the drink that was to sustain them in their long day's work. Some one, whether soldier or Jew we know not, heard the cry, "I thirst," and, prompted by a rough pity, stretched out a cane or stalk of hyssop (John 19 : 29), with the sponge that had been dipped in the wine upon it, and bore it to the parched lips of the Sufferer. It was not now refused (John 19 : 30). — *Ellicott.* Let alone; or, let me be; quit interfering. In Matthew these words are addressed to the man who gave the vinegar; here, spoken by him to the others. A sign of accuracy: such a conversation is natural; the one addressed by the crowd flinging back their own words. — *Schaff.* The crowd say, Let (him) alone; do not give him drink, for he expects Elijah to help him. The one who gave him drink says, Let (me) alone; I will give him drink, and see if Elijah will come.

37. Jesus cried with a loud voice. Saying, "It is finished" (John 19 : 30), (the sixth word from the cross). The three Evangelists all dwell upon the loudness of the cry, as it had been the triumphant note of a conqueror. — *Cambridge Bible.* The last words from the cross were those recorded in Luke 23 : 46, "Father, into thy hands," etc. This cry of Jesus teaches us that his death does not proceed from the decay of his strength, but from the excess of his love; that his life is not taken from him by violence, but that he gives it up by his power. It is, on the part of the Jews, a Deicide and a sacrilege; but on his own it is a holy and voluntary sacrifice. — *Quesnel.* Gave up the ghost. Spirit, opposed to body. It is remarkable that the usual word "died" is not used of Christ in either of the four Gospels, as if to witness, even in the very language employed, to the voluntary character of his death. — *Stock.* The physical cause of his death has been thought by many to have been rupture of the heart. (1) Crucifixion was generally a very lingering death; the victim lived seldom less than twenty-four hours, often three or four days. (2) Usually the

victim died of sheer exhaustion; but Christ was not exhausted, as he cried with a loud voice. (3) John records that blood and water flowed from Christ's side when pierced by the spear. This could only occur if the heart had been ruptured, and the blood, before death, had flowed out into the cavity which surrounds the heart. Christ then literally *died of a broken heart*, caused by his overwhelming mental agony. This theory draws our thoughts away from the mere bodily tortures which Christ endured, to the mysterious woe that pressed upon him on account of imputed sin. — *Stock*. Jesus died at the third hour after midday, the very hour when crowds of worshippers would be thronging into the courts of the temple, and all would be preparing for the evening sacrifice. — *Hanna*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Prof. Park's *Atonement*, especially the article by Caleb Burge. Stroud's *Physical Cause of Christ's Death*. William Smith's *New Testament History*, 289. *Stems and Twigs*, i., 71, 202; ii., 235. Bertram's *Homiletical Encyclopedia*, 57-66. Joseph Cook's *Transcendentalism*, 259; *Orthodoxy*, 133. Stevenson's *Christ on the Cross*, an exposition of the Twenty-second Psalm. Archbishop Thompson's essay on the death of Christ, in *Aids to Faith*, p. 360. Dr. Hanna's *Last Day of our Lord's Passion*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The atonement by the cross. We get some faint idea of the effect of the atonement from an incident which Bronson Alcott relates as having taken place in his school in Boston some years ago. "One day I called up before me a pupil eight or ten years of age, who had violated an important regulation of the school. All the pupils were looking on, and they knew what the rule of the school was. I put the ruler in the hand of the offending pupil; I extended my hand; I told him to strike. The instant the boy saw my extended hand, and heard my command to strike, I saw a struggle begin in his face. A new light sprang up in his countenance. A new set of shuttles seemed to be weaving a new nature within him. I kept my hand extended. The school was in tears. The boy struck once, and he himself burst into tears. I constantly watched his face; and he seemed in a bath of fire, which was giving him a new nature. He had a different mood toward the school, and toward the violated law. The boy seemed transformed by the idea that I should take chastisement in place of his punishment. He went back to his seat, and ever after was one of the most docile of the pupils, although he had been at first one of the rudest." — *Bronson Alcott*. Note, (1) the boy had sinned, (2) he was conscious of sin, (3) he deserved punishment, (4) to let him go would ruin the moral discipline of the school, (5) the boy could not forgive himself or escape from his sin, (6) it put him in antagonism with his teacher. Mr. Alcott's course (1) affected the boy well; it touched his heart; (2) it affected the school well; it was perfectly safe to offer forgiveness under such conditions; (3) it affected the sense of justice in the teacher; it was not right to treat good and bad alike.

PRACTICAL.

Christ's atonement on the cross was not like the "Victim" of Tennyson, or Iphigenia forced to die for the Athenians; for neither God nor man forced Christ to suffer. It was his own voluntary offering; and, being God, it expressed what God was willing to suffer to save men from their sins. (1) It enabled God to offer forgiveness, and yet to honor his law, so that men would be even more careful to keep the law than if they saw the wicked punished. (2) It proves to us that God is ready to forgive. (3) It shows the evil of sin, that demands such a cost in order to be saved from it. (4) It shows that we cannot enter heaven unless we are cleansed from sin. (5) It proves the love of God to man. (6) It furnishes every possible motive for turning from sin, touching the heart with love, showing our danger, teaching the law of duty, which dies rather than fail or neglect, giving us hope of forgiveness and life. (7) It shows the value of our souls, to be worth such a price. (8) It shows the value of salvation, and the worth of eternal life in heaven. (9) All this will be in vain unless we repent and believe.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We may take for the subject of this lesson SCENES AT THE CRUCIFIXION. (1) *From nine o'clock till noon, the three first words from the cross* (vers. 27-32), — with the mockeries. (2) *The darkness, the fourth word from the cross* (vers. 33-35). Stress should be laid on that terrible cry of Christ burdened with our sin. (3) *The closing scenes* (vers. 36, 37). The *fifth, sixth, and seventh words from the cross*. (4) *The atonement*. What all this was for, and how Christ's death atones for our sins. The lessons from the cross.

LESSON X. — DECEMBER 3.

AFTER HIS DEATH. — MARK 15:38-47.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Truly this man was the Son of God.* — VER. 39.**TIME.** — Friday afternoon, 15th Nisan (April 7), A. D. 30. From three o'clock to sunset.**PLACE.** — Calvary, just outside the walls of Jerusalem, probably on the north-west.**PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.** — Matt. 27:51-66. Luke 23:45-56. John 19:31-42.**EVENTS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CRUCIFIXION.**

- (1) The veil of the temple was rent.
- (2) The earthquake, and the rising of saints from the dead (given only by Matthew).
- (3) The centurion at the cross.
- (4) The watching of the women.
- (5) The piercing of Jesus with the spear.
- (6) The taking down from the cross.
- (7) The burial.

38. And ¹the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39. ¶ And ²when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

And the veil of the temple ³⁸was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when ³⁹the centurion, which stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was

¹ Matt. 27:51. Luke 23:45. ² Matt. 27:54. Luke 23:47.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Power of the Cross. — Vers. 38, 39. 38. The veil of the temple. The beautiful thick, costly veil of purple and gold, inwrought with figures of cherubim, 20 feet long and 30 broad, which separated the holy place from the most holy. — *Cambridge Bible.* The holy of holies was the apartment which contained the ark of the covenant. This ark, containing the sacred law, and comprising the mercy-seat below the cherubim, was the peculiar shrine of the Godhead. Only the high priest could enter this apartment, and he but once a year (Exod. 30:10. Lev. 16:2-19) to sprinkle blood upon the mercy-seat, to blot out the transgressions which the law within the ark was ever charging against the people. The rending of this veil unmistakably indicated that the final sacrifice had been now made, for all time, and that henceforth access to God, through Christ's death, was open to all. — *Abbott.* That veil was the special, as the temple itself was a more general, symbol of Christ's body, the visible covering which enshrined the abode of Deity. — *Smith.* From top to the bottom. How emphatic the statement "*from top to bottom!*" as if to say, Come boldly now to the throne of grace; *the veil is clean gone*; the mercy-seat stands open to the gaze of sinners, and the way to it is sprinkled with the blood of Him "who through the eternal Spirit hath offered himself without spot to God!" Before, it was death to go in: now it is death to stay out. See more on this glorious subject, Heb. 9:9-12; 10:20. — *J. F. and B.* At this same time another strange thing occurred. There was an earthquake, and the tombs of many saints were opened, and the saints came forth after Christ's resurrection, and appeared to many (Matt. 27:52, 53).

39. When the centurion. A centurion was an officer of the Roman army, answering to the captain in our own organization. Originally he commanded a hundred men. This one had, with four soldiers, charge of the crucifixion. Which stood over against him. Opposite; in front of him. Mark mentions as the single witness of Christ's majesty in dying, this captain; Matthew associates with the centurion, his band; and Luke informs us the consternation was general (Luke 23:48). — *Lange.* So cried out, etc. The Revised leaves this phrase out, and sums up all in "so." There was something in this last cry, and in the manner of his death, that impressed the centurion as superhuman. What seems to have specially arrested his attention was the strong voice of the expiring Jesus, and his firm confidence in God. — *Clark.* Doubtless both Christ's personal character, and the phenomena of nature which accompanied his death, contributed to produce the impression. — *Abbott.* This man was the Son of God. Or, "God's Son." The heathen officer may have used these words in the heathen sense, hero or demi-god; but this is not probable. For he had heard this accusation, and must have known something of Jewish opinion; heathen became

40. ¹There were also women looking on ²afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41. Who also, when he was in Galilee, ³followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

the Son of God. And there ⁴⁰were also women beholding from afar: among whom ~~were~~ both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome: who, when he was in ⁴¹Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

¹ Matt. 27:55. Luke 23:49. ² Ps. 38:11. ³ Luke 8:2,3.

Christians through the preaching of the cross, why not through the sight of the dying Redeemer? Such a conversion would be thus indicated. Only the centurion thus spoke; but, as the soldiers "feared," some decided spiritual effect may have been produced on them also. — *Schaff*. Observe that he says not *is*, but *was*, a Son of God. It is worth noticing that the cross had greater effect on the centurion, who was before simply ignorant of and indifferent to Christ, than on the Pharisees, who had the advantage of him in religious knowledge and culture, but had steeled themselves against the truth. — *Abbott*. The heathen coloring is exceedingly natural; but the germ is evidently not a superstitious conceit, but a confession of faith. — *Lange*. The cross is early giving tokens of its power. It lays hold of the dying thief, and opens to him the gates of paradise. It lays hold of this centurion, and works in him a faith which, let us hope, deepened into a trust in Jesus as his Saviour. From such unlikely quarters came the two testimonies borne to the Lord's divinity the day he died. — *Hanna*.

II. The Ministering Women. — Vers. 40, 41. 40. There were also women. Forerunners of the noble army of holy women, who were, in the ages to come, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, to minister at many a death-bed out of love for him who died "the death." — *Cambridge Bible*. The attendance of women at the cross is mentioned by the four Evangelists; but Luke does not give their names, and adds that "all his acquaintance" were there. The disciples, then, were eye-witnesses of the crucifixion. — *Abbott*. John was certainly present, probably some of the other disciples. — *Schaff*. Afar off. At one time a few ventured near the cross (John 19:25-27), but not "many." Their attachment to the Saviour chained them to the spot; their modesty kept them in its outskirts, since Jesus was unclad, yet within hearing of the cross (John 19:25, 26). — *Binney*. Afar off, because it was not a proper place for women among the rough crowd who surrounded the cross. They came as near as was possible. Perhaps, too, they could not endure to see the suffering of one they so much loved. It is inconsistent with the love and devotion of these women to think that it was the fear of being recognized that kept them afar off. — *P*. Mary Magdalene. Mentioned first here and in Luke 8:2 (among those who ministered to him). Compare Matt. 23:1. John 20:1, 11-18. There is no evidence that she was the sinful woman who anointed our Lord's feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:37). Many confuse her with another Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed our Lord in Bethany (Matt. 26:6-13, etc.). — *Schaff*. Mary the mother of James. Described by John 19:25, as "the wife of Cleophas," elsewhere called Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3). Cleophas and Alphaeus are different Greek forms of the same Hebrew word. Nothing is known of her, except the information given here and in the accounts of her visit to the sepulchre with Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28:1-11. Mark 16:1-8. Luke 24:1-11). — *Abbott*. Mother of James the less. So called to distinguish him from James the brother of John. It may refer to his age or his stature. He was one of the twelve apostles. See Mark 3:18; and note, Lesson VI., First Quarter. Joses. Or, Joseph. Nothing is known of him. Salome. Salome was the mother of James the elder and John, both apostles, and the wife of Zebedee, and probably the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:25). — *P*. The mother of Jesus, so touchingly mentioned by the beloved disciple (John 19:26, 27) had probably been led away by him before this time. When the mother of our Lord withdrew, the others remained "beholding afar off." These pious women, who, with the courage of heroes, witnessed the dying moments of their Lord and Master, and sat over against the lonely sepulchre (Matt. 27:61), are the shining examples of female constancy and devotion to Christ which we now can witness every day in all the churches, and which will never cease. — *Schaff*.

41. When he was in Galilee, followed . . . ministered. It refers to a long and loving service during our Lord's ministry in Galilee (Luke 8:1-3). We have thus *two* groups of women, — those who formed part of his habitual attendants, and others who accompanied him on his last journey. — *Cook*. Many other women. But many others, who could not get into the innermost circle, or whose circumstances did not permit their

42. ¶ ¹ And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, which also ² waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

And when even was now ⁴² come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came Joseph ⁴³ of Arimathea, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

¹ Matt. 27 : 57. Luke 23 : 50. John 19 : 38. ² Luke 2 : 25, 38.

frequent absence from home, had yet been blessed by our Lord, and felt irresistibly attracted toward him. Hence they, too, lingered on in view of the cross. — *Morison*. Who came up with him to Jerusalem. From Galilee, to be present at the passover, and to enjoy whatever manifestations of his royal nature and office it might please the great Master to make.

III. The Burial. — Vers. 42-47. 42. When the even was come. The Jews reckoned two evenings; one commencing some time before sunset, and the other at sunset. What is related in this verse and the following, commenced before the latest evening; so that nothing might remain to be done on the sabbath. The Jewish sabbath commenced on our Friday evening, at sunset. — *Ripley*. Because it was the preparation. The day was now drawing to a close, and at sunset (soon after six P.M.) the sabbath would begin. "That sabbath day was a high day;" especially as being the *second day* of the feast of unleavened bread, when the first-fruits of the harvest were offered in the temple, and whence the 50 days were reckoned to the Day of Pentecost. For that sabbath this day itself was the "preparation." This statement, twice made by St. John, has caused much debate; but it seems to refer simply to the custom of preparing for any sacred festival on the previous day. On this "preparation day" especially, they would put away all pollutions* and signs of mourning that might mar the coming feast. So, though they had not scrupled to enact on it a deed which would have profaned any day, they could not endure its defilement by the consequences of their judicial murder. — *Smith*.

43. On the events which immediately succeeded before the request of Joseph (the piercing of his side, in consequence of the scruples of the Jews, which required burial that evening), see John 19:31-37. — *Schaff*. Joseph of Arimathea. A rich man, and a disciple. Not many such were found among Christ's followers. But the Scripture was to be fulfilled in this, "He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death" (Isa. 53:9). This man is called by Luke "a good man and a just. The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them [i.e., who condemned and crucified him] — who also himself waited for the kingdom of God." John says of him, "being a disciple of Jesus, but *secretly*, for fear of the Jews" (19:38). — *Jacobus*. Arimathea (heights), a town in Judea. An old tradition places it at the modern Ramleh, but this is generally discredited. Some identify it with Ramah; others, with less probability, with Renthich, 10 miles east of Joppa. — *Schaff's Bible Dictionary*. Honorable. "Honorable" may be a conventional term, equivalent to our "worshipful;" but it probably implies that Joseph held a leading position in the Sanhedrim. — *Cook*. The Revised translates, "of honorable estate." Counsellor, or senator; i.e., a member of the Sanhedrim. Which also waited for the kingdom of God. St. Matthew, "was Jesus' disciple." He had been a student of prophecy and of the signs of the times, and had come to the conclusion that the crisis of the ages was at hand. Notwithstanding his high position in society, and the consequent influences that were blowing in upon him in the direction of spiritual indifference, he also himself, as well as the humbler and avowed disciples of Jesus, looked for the speedy establishment of the Messianic kingdom. — *Morison*. Came; closer to the scene of crucifixion; and saw that Jesus was dead, and learned that the body, at the request of the Jews, was to be taken down before sunset. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night (John 3:1, 2), now joined with Joseph, his fellow-counsellor, in caring for the body of Jesus, and brought spices for its preservation (John 19:39). Went in boldly unto Pilate. Mark alone, as his manner is, notices the *boldness* which this required. The act would, without doubt, identify him for the first time with the disciples of Christ. Marvellous it certainly is, that one who, while Jesus was yet alive, merely refrained from condemning him, not having the courage to espouse his cause by one positive act, should, now that he was dead, and his cause apparently dead with him, summon up courage to go in personally to the Roman governor, and ask permission to take down and inter the body. But if this be the first instance, it is not the last, that a seemingly dead Christ has awakened a sympathy which a living one had failed to evoke. The heroism of faith is usually kindled by desperate circumstances, and is not seldom displayed by those who before were the most timid, and

44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead : and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46. ¹ And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And he bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock: and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

¹ Matt. 27 : 59, 60. Luke 23 : 53. John 19 : 40.

scarce known as disciples at all.—*J. F. and B.* The cross transfigures cowards into heroes.—*Maclear.* It was no light matter Joseph had undertaken: for to take part in a burial, at any time, would defile him for seven days, and make every thing unclean which he touched (Num. 19 : 11. Hag. 2 : 13); and to do so now involved his seclusion through the whole passover week, with all its holy observances and rejoicings.—*Geikie.* In later martyrdoms such a request cost men their lives; in this case it must at least have cost Joseph much obloquy.—*Abbott.* Craved (asked) the body of Jesus. It was not allowed to remove a body from the cross without formal permission from the procurator. It was not the Roman custom to remove the bodies of the crucified from the cross. Instead of shortening their agonies, the Roman law left them to die a lingering death, and suffered their bodies to moulder under the action of sun and rain, or be devoured by wild beasts. The more merciful Jewish law, however, did not allow such barbarities; and the Roman rulers had made an express exception in their favor. In accordance, therefore, with the request of the Jewish authorities, the legs of the malefactors had been broken to put them out of their misery (John 19 : 31) (rather, to make sure of their death); but our Lord was found to be *dead already* (John 19 : 33), and the soldier had pierced his side with a spear, the point of which was a hand-breadth in width, thus causing a wound which would of itself have been sufficient to cause death, whereupon there had issued forth blood and water (John 19 : 34). Thus the holy body was now ready for its entombment.—*Maclear.*

44. Pilate marvelled. Death by crucifixion did not generally supervene, even for three days; and 24 or 36 hours is said to be the earliest period when it would be thus brought about. Pilate, therefore, marvelled at the early death of Jesus, for he had been on the cross but six hours. Calling unto him the centurion. Pilate, before giving up the body to his friends, would learn how the fact stood from the centurion, whose business it was to oversee the execution. "And when he knew it of the centurion," that it was as Joseph had said, "he gave"—rather, "made a gift of"—"the body to Joseph;" struck, possibly, with the rank of the petitioner and the dignified boldness of the petition, in contrast with the spirit of the other party and the low rank to which he had been led to believe all the followers of Christ belonged. But, whatever were Pilate's motives, two most blessed objects were thus secured: (1) *The reality of our Lord's death was attested* by the party of all others most competent to decide on it, and certainly free from all bias,—the officer in attendance. (2) The dead Redeemer, thus committed by the supreme political authority to the care of his friends, was thereby *protected from all further indignities*; a thing most befitting indeed, now that his work was done, but impossible, so far as we can see, if his enemies had been at liberty to do with him as they pleased. How wonderful are even the minutest features of this matchless history!—*J. F. and B.*

45. He gave the body to Joseph. The word "gave" appears to be used designedly by St. Mark, implying that Pilate, who from his character might have expected to extort money from the wealthy "counsellor," *freely gave up* the body at his request, placing it at his disposal by a written order, or a verbal command to the centurion.—*Cambridge Bible.* Pilate, as a measure of relief to his conscience, *gave* the body to Joseph.—*Abbott.*

46. He bought fine linen. A winding-sheet. This would enclose the spices used in the temporary embalming, which now took place, Nicodemus having brought the spices (John 19 : 39, 40). There was not time enough to embalm on Friday evening, so the costly gifts of Nicodemus were used to preserve the body, the women preparing in the interval what they thought necessary for the further anointing.—*Schaff.* Took him down. This taking down from the cross was probably done by the loving hands of the disciples: this is more probable than that it was done by the Roman soldiers.—*Abbott.* A sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock. Matthew alone describes it as Joseph's tomb. It was in a garden, and near the place of crucifixion (John 19 : 41).—*Abbott.* The neighborhood of Jerusalem, like all other parts of Palestine, has, since the earliest times, abounded in

47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of ^{And Mary Magdalene and 47} ^{Mary the mother of Josès} Josès beheld where he was laid. ^{beheld where he was laid.}

tombs hewn out in the limestone rock. (They were cut horizontally, and not downward.) Princes, rich men, every one who could by any means secure it, desired, above all things, to prepare for themselves and their families an "everlasting house;" and such a tomb, never yet used, had been hewn out in the hill-side for himself, by Joseph, in a garden not far from Calvary. — *Geikie*. The Evangelists take notice that it was a sepulchre hewn out of a rock, to show that there was no passage by which the disciples could get into it, but the one at which the guards were placed, and consequently that it was not in their power to steal away the body while the guards remained there performing their duty. — *Macknight*. The choice of this tomb was, on *their* part, dictated by the double circumstance that it was so near at hand, and by its belonging to a friend of the Lord; and, as there was need of haste, even they would be struck with the providence which thus supplied it. But there was one recommendation of it which probably would not strike them; but God had it in view. It was "a new sepulchre" (John 19:41), "*wherein never man before was laid*" (Luke 23:53). — *J. F. and B.* This fact seems designed to overcome any suspicion as to the identity of Him who rose. — *Schaff*. Rolled a stone unto the door. The mouth of these rocky tombs was closed with a large stone (like a millstone), called by the Jews *Gbolal*, which could only be rolled there by the labor of several men (John 11:39). — *Cambridge Bible*. The Evangelists seem to have been thus particular in the narrative of the burial, to prove, beyond all possibility of doubt, those two great points of the Christian religion, the death and resurrection of Jesus. — *Stanhope*.

47. Beheld where he was laid. According to Luke, the female disciples from Galilee all beheld the sepulchre, and returned to prepare spices and ointments, resting on the sabbath, which began that evening. These two not only saw where he was laid, but lingered there, sitting over against the sepulchre, as the evening came on (Matt. 27:61). — *Schaff*. Meanwhile, the fears of the chief priests and their party had already awaked. A meeting had been held immediately after the crucifixion, and the success of the scheme to crush Jesus had doubtless been the subject of hearty mutual congratulations. But they dreaded that all was not over. It was remembered by one or more that "the deceiver" had spoken darkly of rising from the dead on the third day; and his disciples, acting on this hint, might steal the body, and spread abroad the assertion that he had actually risen, misleading the people more than ever by claiming for him divine honors. It was hence necessary that the grave should be watched for three days. A deputation was therefore appointed to wait on Pilate, representing their apprehensions. Tired of them, and hating them, the governor was in no humor to argue. "Ye have a guard," said he, with military bluntness. "Go, make it as sure as ye can." This they did. Passing a strong cord across the stone, and securing its ends by clay, they sealed it, after noting that the (Roman) soldiers were duly stationed so as to make approach without their knowledge impossible. And thus the Redeemer was left — pale, but victorious — to sleep through the sabbath. — *Geikie*. But, while they are trying to prevent the resurrection of the Prince of Life, God makes use of their precautions for his own ends. Their stone-covered, seal-secured sepulchre shall preserve the sleeping dust of the Son of God free from all indignities, in undisturbed, sublime repose; while their watch shall be his guard of honor until the angels shall come to take their place! — *Cambridge Bible*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The centurion. Napoleon, in view of Christ's life and death, testified to one of his officers that if he did not believe in the divinity of Christ he (Napoleon) did wrong to appoint him general. Rousseau declared, "Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus Christ like a God."

II. Christ in the tomb. These three days were the darkest in the whole experience of the apostles, — every hope, every desire, the Saviour, the promised kingdom, were all buried in the tomb. But it was like a seed planted, in order to spring up and become a great tree. There is an old Persian fable that the earth was created a great barren plain, without one plant or tree. An angel was sent to scatter broadcast the choicest seeds over

all. Satan, seeing the seeds lying on the ground, said, "This is the work of the Almighty : I will frustrate his plans." So he proceeded to bury every seed in the soil, and to summon sun and rain to make it rot away. But, while he gazed with malignant smile on the ruin he had made, the seed germinated and sprang up from the soil, and clothed the whole earth with plants and flowers, in a loveliness undreamed before. And a voice came from heaven, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die."—P.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 38. The way to holiness and heaven is opened to all by the death of Jesus Christ.
2. By his death the veil that hides the highest truths of God was taken away.
3. Vers. 39, 43. The power of the death of Christ to convince men of the truth.
4. Vers. 40, 41. Women have ever been among the best and most useful friends of Christ and his Church.
5. The blessedness of ministering to Jesus.
6. Though afar off when their services were not needed, they were ever nearest when they could bring help or comfort.
7. Ver. 43. Secret disciples become bold and open disciples in the presence of their crucified Lord.
8. Vers. 44, 45. The unconscious testimony of unbelievers to the facts of the Gospel.
9. God takes care that no link be wanting to prove that Jesus is the very Son of God.
10. Jesus Christ sanctifies the tomb. He has broken its power, and proved that "death does not end all," but is a gate to eternal life.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Many precautions were taken, and testimonies given, to make sure that Jesus was really dead, and thus prove to us that THROUGH DEATH LIES THE WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE. I. *Some wonders wrought by the dying Saviour*, vers. 38, 39, 43: (1) the veil rent; (2) the graves of saints opened; (3) the centurion convinced; (4) the secret disciple made bold and open. II. *The ministering women*, vers. 40, 41: who were they; what they had done for Christ; what Christ had done for them; what he has done for woman. III. *The burial*, vers. 42-47: Joseph and Nicodemus; the proofs of Christ's death; the new tomb; the seal and guard; why necessary to make sure that Christ was really dead; how Christ's death gives comfort to us in death.

LESSON XI. — DECEMBER 10.

HIS RESURRECTION. — MARK 16: 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.* — 1 COR. 15: 20.

TIME. — Sabbath morning, 17th Nisan (April 9), A. D. 30; the third day after the crucifixion.

PLACE. — In a garden near Calvary. At the tomb where Jesus was laid Friday evening.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS. — Matt. 28: 1-8. Luke 24: 1-11. John 20: 1-21.

ORDER OF EVENTS.

1. At dawn there is an earthquake, and an angel rolls the stone from the door of the sepulchre (Matt. 28: 2-4).
2. The soldiers on guard are affrighted, and become as dead men.
3. The women approach the sepulchre from the city; Mary Magdalene alone, or with the other Mary and Salome, arrive in advance of the others, — starting at dawn and arriving at sunrise (Mark 16: 1).
4. Mary, seeing the sepulchre empty, hastes away to tell Peter and John (John 20: 1, 2).
5. The other women continue to approach, and, entering the tomb, see the angel within, who tells them that Jesus has risen (Mark 16: 2, 7).
6. They leave the sepulchre to inform the apostles (Mark 16: 8).

INTRODUCTORY.

At the moment when Christ died, nothing could have seemed more abjectly weak, more pitifully hopeless, more absolutely doomed to scorn and extinction and despair, than the Church which he had founded. It numbered but a handful of weak followers. They were poor, they were ignorant, they were hopeless. They could not claim a single synagogue or a single sword. So feeble were they, and insignificant, that it would have looked like foolish partiality to prophesy for them the limited existence of a Galilean sect. How was it that these dull and ignorant men, with their cross of wood, triumphed over the deadly fascinations of sensual mythologies, conquered kings and their armies, and overcame the world? There is one, and one only, *possible* answer, — the resurrection from the dead. All this vast revolution was due to the power of Christ's resurrection. — *Farrar*.

1. And ¹ when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome,² had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And when the sabbath was ¹ past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early ² on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when

2. ³ And very early in the morning, the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

¹ Matt. 28: 1. Luke 24: 1. John 20: 1. ² Luke 23: 56. ³ Luke 24: 1. John 20: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

1. When the sabbath was past; i.e., our Saturday, the Jewish sabbath. These disciples would not break the sabbath, even to preserve the body of their beloved Lord. The sabbath ended at sunset; so that Jesus had been dead and buried Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday morning, beginning at the previous sunset, three days according to Jewish reckoning. (See 1 Sam. 30: 12, 13. 2 Chron. 10: 5, 12.) Mary, etc. Luke (24: 10) adds Joanna, who was wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, "and others with them." Had bought. This verb is not in the pluperfect, but in the aorist, and should read simply "bought," as in the Revised. The indication here is, certainly, that this purchase was made on the sabbath, after sunset; the indication in Luke 23: 55, 56, is that it was made on Friday night, after the burial. It may be that the purchases were begun then, but not completed; the evening coming on quickly, and the shops being closed, so that the women had to postpone the completion till the sabbath was past. — *Abbott*. Sweet spices. Aromatics; substances used in embalming. The idea of sweetness is not, however, implied in the original. Many of the substances used for embalming were *bitter*; as, e.g., myrrh, and none of them perhaps could properly be called *sweet*. The word *spices* expresses all that there is in the original. — *Jacobus*. The spices, according to John, were aloe and myrrh. Come and anoint him. Embalm him; or apply these spices to his body to keep it from putrefaction. This is proof that they did not suppose he would rise again. And the fact that they did not *expect* he would rise, gives more strength to the evidence for his resurrection. — *Jacobus*. The hurried burial had not permitted this anointing to be completed: it had been commenced by Nicodemus at the time of the interment (John 19: 39, 40). Perhaps the women were ignorant of that; perhaps they wished to add their own offerings. — *Abbott*. Why, Joseph and Nicodemus had brought "an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloe," and wrapped them with the body of Jesus! Was not this enough? Pardon them if they overdo their part. Cordial love thinks all is not done that should be, unless itself be at the doing. — *Bishop Hacket*.

2. And very early in the morning. . . . at the rising of the sun. Matthew says, "As it began to dawn;" and John, "While it was yet dark." All agree; for sunrise in popular language always means, not the exact second of sunrise, as in an almanac, but the period from the first dawning of light till the sun has risen. Then the coming of the women took some little time; and Mary Magdalene, of whom alone John speaks, may have come first, before the dawn had driven away all the darkness. Came unto the sepulchre. They may have gone singly or in small groups. The home of Salome would naturally be the house occupied by Zebedee and her sons, which, as Caspari has shown, was in Jerusalem; the traditional site — by no means an improbable one — is near the gate Gennath, not far from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Joanna, on the contrary, would, of course, reside with her husband Chuza, steward to Herod, who at that time occupied the Asmonean Palace on Mount Zion. Thus Joanna and her companions would be at a greater distance

3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5. ¹ And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6. ² And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

the sun was risen. And they 3 were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? and looking up, they 4 see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. And entering into the 5 tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he saith 6 unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid

¹ Luke 24: 3. John 20: 11, 12. ² Matt. 28: 5-7.

from the scene of the entombment than Salome and the Marys, and they probably reached it somewhat later. — *Cook*.

3. And they said among themselves. Unaware of the deputation of the Jewish rulers, which had gone to Pilate, and secured the sealing of the stone and the setting of the watch over the tomb (Matt. 27: 62-66), their only anxiety was, Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? — *Cambridge Bible*.

4. Looked. Rather, *looking up*. They may have been looking down before, absorbed in their conversation: the tomb was probably above them, cut horizontally in the face of the rock at a slight elevation. The stone was rolled away. Possibly, "rolled up," as if it had rested in a hollow at the door of the tomb. — *Cook*. Matthew says that an angel came and rolled it away, and that there was an earthquake; but the grave was not opened by the commotion or earthquake, but the commotion or earthquake accompanied the rolling-back of the stone. It is not necessary to suppose that the resurrection accompanied the earthquake. — *Abbott*. It was not for him, to whom (John 20: 19, 20) the stone was no hindrance, but for the women and the disciples, that it was rolled away. — *Alford*. For it was very great. This explains the question in ver. 3: the previous clause of the verse is practically in a parenthesis. So Abbott and Owen.

The stone rolled away. Prospective difficulties in the path of duty, persons often find removed when they come to the place of meeting them. This may be inferred, (1) from the experience of God's people, (2) from the promises of God. I. This inquiry (in ver. 3) may be addressed to those who have never received Christ in their hearts, but whose hearts are closed and sealed against the truth. Such an obstruction is ignorance, — a stone enclosing a grave. Such also is unbelief, self-conceit, earthly-mindedness, prejudice. II. Apply this inquiry to the difficulties the sincere Christian meets in communion with God, whether in private or public worship. III. The inquiry is suitable in contemplation of the difficulties which beset the attempt to spread abroad the gospel of Christ. IV. Apply the question to the general resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is a cause efficient and meritorious of the resurrection of his saints. — *Biblical Museum*.

5. And entering into the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene seeing the stone rolled away, and supposing the body had been removed by the Jews, runs to find Peter and John (John 20: 1, 2). The other women proceed to the sepulchre, and enter. Saw a young man. Matthew calls him an angel. Luke says that there were two who stood; i.e., appeared suddenly. Besides, they might easily have both sat and stood during the interview; might have been both outside and inside at different moments; and they might have been seen both singly and together in the sudden and shifting apparition. — *Jacobus*. Sitting on the right side. As they entered, apparently. He might be sitting on one of the ledges or platforms which are common in the Oriental sepulchres, and which are convenient for the accommodation of the body during the process of anointing. — *Morison*. In a long white garment. Matthew says it was white as snow, and his countenance was like lightning. The white raiment was a symbol of purity and of fellowship with God (Rev. 3: 4, 5, 18; 4: 4; 6: 11; 7: 9-13). There is some significance in the fact, that in all these cases in Revelation the white robe is the dress, not of an angel proper, but of a departed saint. Coupling this fact with the statements in Mark and Luke, may we not reasonably suppose that these were the spirits of men, possibly the Moses and Elijah who had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with their Lord? If so, they bore an additional testimony to the resurrection. — *Abbott*. Affrighted. The idea of *amazement* is more prominent than *fright*. — *Morison*. The affrighted soldiers of the watch, who became as dead men, must have been near, but did not prevent the disciples from entering the tomb. Perhaps they were not noticed in the twilight.

7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him,¹ as he said unto you.

him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

¹ Matt. 26: 32. Mark 14: 28.

6. He is risen. "Through woman death was first introduced into the world; to woman the first announcement was made of the resurrection."

PROOFS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidences of those who have written about them; and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the mind of a fair inquirer, than that Christ died, and rose again from the dead. — *Dr. Arnold*. Moreover, it was *precisely the same body which was buried* that rose again, or all the proofs fail.

I. *Proved by the friends of Christ*. (1) The apostles had the most powerful faith in the fact. They were unanimous in their declaration of it a few days after, on the very spot on which it occurred, and that to men who were prepared to do any thing to conceal the fact. (2) This faith came in direct opposition to their previous beliefs and worldly interests. They had no expectation and no hope of such resurrection. (3) They had every opportunity for thoroughly satisfying themselves on the point. (4) By their declaration of the fact they induced thousands of the very enemies of Christ to believe in it, and that close to the time and near the very spot on which it occurred. The early Church universally believed in it; and it is incredible that a myth, a false story, should have so grown up without substantial foundation. — *From Thomas' Genius of the Gospel*. (5) They attested this fact not only by their lives but by their death. (6) Only the fact of the resurrection can account for the marvellous change in the spirit and character of the apostles. The resurrection completely transformed them; inspired them with a new conception of Christ's kingdom as for all people, with a new courage to suffer for the sake of their risen Lord and his kingdom, and with a new purpose to preach Christ and him crucified everywhere as a spiritual redemption for sin (Acts 2: 39; 5: 41; 10: 43). Neither fraud nor fiction is competent to account for the moral contrast. (7) A singular and significant testimony to the truth of the resurrection is afforded by the change in the sabbath day. It was changed, not by any express command in the New Testament, but by the almost universal consent of the Church, which could not endure to observe as a day of joy and gladness that on which Christ lay in the tomb, nor forbear to mark as a weekly festival that on which he arose. — *Abbott*.

II. *Proved by the enemies of Christ*. (2) It was impossible for these enemies to deny that Christ had by some means left the grave. (3) It was impossible for them to give any other explanation than that which they now invented, — that his disciples stole the body. (3) It was impossible for this, the only explanation they could give, to be credited; for (a) the disciples could not have stolen him if they would; (b) it was in the last degree improbable that all the Roman watch were asleep; (c) nor would the Jewish council have voted money merely to have reported a truth; (d) if the soldiers slept, they could not have known that the disciples stole the body: their story contradicted itself. — *Genius of the Gospel*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION. (1) This resurrection is the crowning proof that Christ is the Son of God. If he could not conquer death, and come back from heaven, he could not prove that at the first he came from heaven. (2) It is the proof of immortal life beyond the grave; that death does not end all, but the soul lives after the body dies. (3) It is the assurance of our own resurrection. (4) It shows that our Saviour has power over every one of our enemies. (5) It teaches the moral resurrection, that being dead to sin we should be alive unto God.

Behold the place where they laid him. The angel shows them the grave-clothes, and the face-cloth folded by itself.

7. Tell his disciples and Peter. Observe, that as Christ's first appearance is to Mary Magdalene (John 20: 18), out of whom he had cast seven devils, so his special message is to Peter, who had denied him. — *Abbott*. A touching commentary on our Saviour's saying that he came to save sinners. Tell Peter, for it will be news more welcome to him than to any of them; for he is in sorrow for sin, and he will be afraid lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him. — *Matthew Henry*. (1) Tell Peter, although he has sinned so grievously. It was heartless, repeated, public, wilful. (2) Tell Peter, for he has wept. God's anger against his children ceases with the commencement of their penitence. (3) Tell Peter, for he has suffered. His thoughts were God's chastening rod. (4) Tell Peter he is dear to Christ. Sin can grieve Christ, cause him to withdraw, wound and disfigure us, but it cannot alter his love. (5) Tell Peter, for he is your brother. They had sinned. Have not we denied our Lord? — *Stems and Twigs*. He goeth before you. This language does not

8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: ¹neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

And they went out, and fled 8 from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

¹ Matt. 28: 8. Luke 24: 9.

imply a literal travelling by Christ. The angel refers to the Lord's last prophecy of his resurrection, which contained a promise couched in almost these very words (Matt. 26: 32). — *Abbott*. The appearance in Galilee was his seventh appearance to his disciples.

8. Neither said they any thing to any man; i.e., on their way to tell the disciples. "For," says Dr. Wells, "they were afraid to stay, and not to hasten all they could to the apostles." They were in a tumult of commotion, and could not pause by the way to speak to any. — *Morison*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. When it was said that the telegraph could not be made to succeed, the answer was the fact of a working telegraph. To the denial that a steamship could cross the ocean, the answer was a steamship that did cross it. So Christ's resurrection is the *fact* that answers all doubts as to the life beyond the grave, and our own resurrection. It is a specimen, an example. Only we must remember that Christ's resurrection was not complete till after the ascension. Not till then did he receive his spiritual body. — *P*.

II. The resurrection was the transfiguration of Christ's life and death. His career was like a beautiful statue, unless the resurrection gave it life and soul. We worship not a dead Christ, but a living Christ who once died for us.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. See a good example of keeping the sabbath.
2. Vers. 3, 4. If we go forward in the path of duty, God will remove the invincible obstacles from our way.
3. Ver. 5. Men are affrighted sometimes at God's best gifts, and the way in which he helps us.
4. Those that seek Christ need not fear though they do not find him at first, and in the way they expect.
5. God is often far better to us than our fears.
6. Ver. 6. The comforts and blessings that come to us through the resurrection of Christ. See notes on ver. 6.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

Our thoughts to-day will naturally gather around the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. (1) *The early visit to the tomb* (vers. 1-5). See that the pupils understand the order of occurrences, and the reconciliation of apparent discrepancies. Impress the lessons which are taught by their fears of the stone against the door of the tomb, and its unexpected removal; and also of their escape from the guard, a hinderance they did not even know of. (2) *The resurrection of Christ* (vers. 6-8). The word of the angel; why Peter in particular was mentioned. What lesson is taught by this, and by Jesus appearing first of all to Mary Magdalene. The story of the guard. Proofs of the resurrection of Christ. The importance of that resurrection to us.

LESSON XII.—DECEMBER 17.

AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.—MARK 16:9-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*—MARK 16:15.

TIME.—Sunday, April 9, A. D. 30, and the following 40 days. The ascension was May 18.

PLACE.—Jerusalem and vicinity.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 28:9-20. Luke 24:12-53. John 20:3-31; 21:1-25. Acts 1:3-8. 1 Cor. 15:4-8.

OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.—There are eleven recorded:—

1. To Mary Magdalene alone (Mark 16:9. John 20:11-18), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 9.
2. To the women returning from the sepulchre (Matt. 28:9, 10), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 9.
3. To Simon Peter alone (Luke 24:34), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 9.
4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24:13), etc., — Sunday, April 9.
5. To the apostles at Jerusalem, excepting Thomas, who was absent (John 20:19), — Sunday, April 9.
6. To the apostles at Jerusalem a second time, when Thomas was present (John 20:26, 29), — Sunday, April 16.
7. At the Sea of Tiberias, when seven disciples were fishing (John 21:1).
8. To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16).
9. To above 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6), in Galilee, near the time of the last.
10. To James only (1 Cor. 15:7).
11. To all the apostles on Mount Olivet at his ascension (Luke 24:51), — Thursday, May 18.

INTRODUCTION.

The Gospel of Mark ends with ver. 8, and vers. 9-20 are omitted, in the two *oldest* and best manuscripts of the New Testament (the Sinaitic and the Vatican); but in the Vatican there is a column left blank after ver. 8, while in every other instance the next book begins on the next column. — *Schaff*. We may assume, (1) that the verses were actually written by St. Mark, and that in the course of time a mutilated copy came into the hands of scribes who perpetuated the result of an accident in the MSS. (2) We may suppose that the writer of the Gospel wrote two copies of it, leaving one unfinished, ending at ver. 8. (3) We may infer that the Gospel, having been originally completed by the writer, was in some way, by accident or design, mutilated; that as such it was reproduced faithfully by some transcribers, while others thought it better to give it a completion of some kind, by condensing what they found in the other Gospels. The last seems the most probable. — *Plumptre*. The question is one of secondary importance; since all that is essential in spirit and substance in this passage is to be found elsewhere in the Gospels, in accounts whose authenticity is undoubted. — *Abbott*.

9. ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week,¹ he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, ² out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven devils.

¹ John 20:14. ² Luke 8:2.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Appearances of Jesus. — Vers. 9-14. 9. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. This appearance is described more fully in John 20:11-17. Mary Magdalene, on finding the tomb empty, went away immediately to inform Peter and John, leaving the other women at the tomb. Soon after these had left, Peter and John arrive in haste, followed by Mary Magdalene. The disciples examine the tomb, and depart, leaving Mary near the sepulchre. While weeping there she looks in, and sees two angels, who speak with her; then, turning back, she sees Jesus himself, whom she thinks to be the gardener, for the tomb was in a garden. She recognizes him by the tone in which he speaks her name. Out of whom he had cast seven devils. Recorded in Luke 8:2. No wonder she loved

10. ¹ And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11. ² And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12. ¶ After that he appeared in another form ³ unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13. And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14. ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15. ⁴ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, ⁵ and preach the gospel to every creature.

She went and told them that ¹⁰ had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, ¹¹ when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.

And after these things he ¹² was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country. And they ¹³ went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them.

And afterward he was mani- ¹⁴ fested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he ¹⁵ said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.

¹ Luke 24: 10. John 20: 18. ² Luke 24: 11. ³ Luke 24: 13. ⁴ Luke 24: 36. John 20: 19. 1 Cor. 15: 5.

⁵ Matt. 28: 19. John 15: 16. ⁶ Col. 1: 23.

her Saviour, and went earliest to his tomb. Why he appeared first to Mary Magdalene in particular: (1) To display the exceeding riches of his grace; (2) to reward her pious assiduity; (3) to give encouragement to all future penitents to the end of time.—*Biblical Museum*.

10. And she went. While she was going to tell the disciples, Jesus appeared to the other women, who had started before on the same errand (Matt. 28:9, 10). Possibly (so Ellicott) Mary had joined the others by this time. As they mourned and wept. It seemed to them that not only had their Friend gone, but every hope of salvation, and of the promised coming of the kingdom of God, had departed with him.

11. They believed not. Perhaps the fact that he had not appeared to any of the apostles had something to do with the incredulity of the latter, for it is natural to suppose that he would first manifest himself to them. Accordingly we find that it was the testimony of Peter that convinced them (Luke 24:34).—*Andrews*. Their disbelief was overruled for good, for it furnishes abundant proof that they did not *invent* the story of the resurrection.—*Schaff*.

12. Jesus next appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34. 1 Cor. 15:5). After that. On the afternoon of the same day (Sunday) (Luke 24:13-32). He appeared in another form. Luke explains this by saying that their eyes were holden. If their eyes were influenced, of course, optically speaking, Jesus would appear in another form.—*Whedon*. The reason they did not know him was that *their eyes were supernaturally influenced*. No change took place in him.—*Alford*. Jesus must have had exactly the same body which was buried, or there is no possible proof that he was really raised to life. And he points out to Thomas the wounds in his hands and feet, to prove to him that he was the very same Jesus who was crucified. Whatever change there was in Jesus was simply in *appearance* and form, as Mark says, and not a change in the body of Jesus itself. Unto two of them. Cleopas, and another disciple. Went into the country. To Emmaus, seven or eight miles to the north-west of Jerusalem.

13. And they went. Back to Jerusalem, to the upper room where the ten disciples were assembled (Luke 24:33). And told it. They related their whole interesting interview. Neither believed they them. And yet they said (Luke 24:33, 34), "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." But there is no real contradiction. Sometimes they would almost receive the glad truth, and then the improbabilities—almost impossibilities—of the case would throw them back again into the dark turmoil of doubts.—*P*.

14. Afterward. Both on that very Sunday night, and also the next Sunday night, in Jerusalem. The eleven. The general name of the company of the apostles, although on the first of the above meetings Thomas was absent. Upbraided them. Or, more literally and pleasantly, *upbraided their unbelief*; as if the reproof terminated on the act.—*Morison*. Unbelief; in respect to our Lord's repeated declaration that he should rise from the dead. (See Matt. 16:21. Mark 9:9-31; 10:34.) Hardness of heart; i.e., stubbornness in rejecting evidence of his resurrection, and dulness in comprehending the great truths which he had announced in reference thereto.—*Jacobus*.

II. The Great Command.—Vers. 15-18.

15. Jesus appeared at various times

16. ¹He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; ²but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; ³In my name shall they cast out devils; ⁴they shall speak with new tongues;

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with

¹ John 3: 18, 36. Acts 2: 38; 16: 30-32. Rom. 10: 9. ² John 12: 48. ³ Luke 10: 17. Acts 5: 16; 8: 7; 16: 18.
⁴ Acts 2: 4; 10: 46; 19: 6. 1 Cor. 12: 10, 28.

and in various places to his disciples during 40 days. At length, on Thursday the 18th of May, the disciples are gathered on Mount Olivet, near Bethany, and Jesus speaks his final words to them. **Go ye into all the world.** Not merely preach in Palestine, and to the Jews, as hitherto. **Preach the gospel.** The good news about Jesus Christ, that he was the Son of God, had brought them the truth from heaven, had lived a perfect life, and died on the cross to atone for their sins, and had been raised again to be their resurrection and life. **To every creature.** In Matthew it is, *Disciple all nations*,—make all nations Christians. Observe that this command implies, (1) that Christianity is a universal religion, not merely one of the religions of the world; (2) that it is adapted to all nations and all classes (Rom. 1: 16), a claim which history has abundantly justified; (3) that not a natural development, but obedience to the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ, constitutes the secret of true civilization among all nations, and thus that Christian missions are the mother of civilization; (4) that from all nations the members of Christ's Church triumphant are to be gathered to God by obedience to this commission (Rom. 10: 11-13).—*Abbott.* The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing: it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder. Look at the religions in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. *The former are alive, the latter are dying or dead.*—*Max Müller.* (1) This is the command of Christ. The Church cannot be obedient, and let one nation be without the gospel. (2) Every nation needs the gospel as much as ours needs it. (3) It is the nature of a living Christianity to be missionary. Max Müller says that of all religions, only the missionary religions are living. That church is dead which is not anxious to preach the gospel to every creature. (4) This is the only way the Church will keep pure. Nothing without this can keep the doctrine or life pure: organizations, creeds, persecutions, all have failed. But any church which seeks to save souls will keep pure, because it cannot do its work without the great main doctrines of Christianity. (5) The true *Broad Church* cares for the world; the *Narrow Church* is the one that cares chiefly for itself. (6) The Church at home is built up faster by its working for the heathen. (7) The grandeur of this work exalts the individual Christians who give and labor. (8) It is blessed to have part in the final triumph of the gospel.—*P.*

16. **He that believeth.** Has faith in, and trusts himself to, Christ as preached in the gospel.—*Riddle.* It is not a mere belief that Christ lived and died, but a trusting to Christ for the forgiveness of sins; a trusting our lives to him, so that we obey his commands in all things; a trusting to him as our Leader and King, so that we become members of his kingdom, and enlist as soldiers in his army. And is baptized. Referring to the rite of baptism, by which the believer publicly acknowledges himself to be a disciple. If any one has not faith enough to *want* to confess Christ before men, he has not faith enough to be saved. **Shall be saved.** From both the present dominion and the future penalty of sin (Matt. 1: 21. Rom. 8: 2). But he that believeth not shall be damned. Rather, condemned. Not he that is in doubt or perplexity, as the disciples in vers. 11, 13, but he that refuses to open his heart to the influence of a living and present Saviour. The declaration here is parallel to and interpreted by John 3: 18, 19; compare John 15: 22. Heb. 2: 3. Observe, then, that not every belief saves (Jas. 2: 19), nor does every unbelief bring into condemnation (John 20: 25-27).—*Prof. Riddle.* The unbeliever is condemned because he remains in his sins, and refuses the pardon and the new heart which Jesus offers.

17. All this great work could be accomplished by the disciples, because Jesus had all power in heaven and on earth,—the whole power of Heaven's love and wisdom and strength; "and all power in *earth*"—power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements, to bend them to this one high object, the evangelization of the world: all this is *given unto him* as the risen Lord of all, to be *by him placed at their command*. "And lo, I am with you all the days;" not only to perpetuity, but without one day's interruption, "even to the end of the world."—*J. F. and B.* One manifestation of that power was the working of miracles, as their Lord had done before. **These signs shall follow.** Not that every Christian should have the power to work miracles, but the miracles shoul

18. ¹They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; ²they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. ¶ So then, ³after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was ⁴received up into heaven, and ⁵sat on the right hand of God.

new tongues: they shall take ¹⁸ up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So then the Lord Jesus, after ¹⁹ he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of

¹ Luke 10: 19. Acts 28: 5. ² Acts 5: 15, 16; 9: 17; 28: 8. Jas. 5: 14, 15. ³ Acts 1: 2, 3. ⁴ Luke 24: 51. ⁵ Ps. 110: 1. Acts 7: 55.

accompany the preaching of the gospel whenever it seemed best, and faith was given. In my name. Our Lord, in his own name and authority, cast out devils; but the power of the apostles to do this resided not in themselves, but was derived from him. That members of the primitive Church possessed power to cast out devils, is proved from the early fathers. (See also Acts 5: 16; 8: 7; 16: 18.) Shall speak with new tongues. This refers to the gift of tongues conferred on the day of Pentecost, and also possessed by the churches planted by the apostles. (Compare Acts 2: 4. 1 Cor. 12: 10, 28; 14: 2, 4, 5, 13, 22, 39.) These references show the extent and design of this gift of tongues.

18. Shall take up serpents. See Acts 28: 3, 5. Other instances are recorded in the fathers. If they drink any deadly thing. The art of mixing subtle and deadly poisons was carried by the Orientals to great perfection. The enemies of the Church, doubtless, resorted often to this mode of getting rid of prominent Christians. But the promise protected them from this evil, and we have no doubt that in many instances it was verified. They shall lay hands, etc. Compare Acts 3: 6, 7; 5: 15. Jas. 5: 14. It is not to be supposed that every member of the primitive Church possessed these miraculous gifts, or that those who did were endowed with all of them. It appears from 1 Cor. 12: 9-11, that these gifts were diversely bestowed, although by the same Spirit. — Owen. This promise is general, without limitation to the first ages of the Church. Should occasion arise for its fulfilment, there can be no doubt that it will be made good in our own or any other time. — Alford. But such signs are not needed in this age, when the divine nature of Christianity is witnessed by such historical evidences as are afforded by the moral, the religious, the social, the political, and even the commercial development, which has everywhere attended on and resulted from its progress. Christianity is itself a greater sign than any the apostles wrought. — Abbott. All the true fruits of faith are its true signs or signals. They authenticate, by divine signature, the divinely transforming energy, and hence the divine reality and glory, of faith's great Object. They have been continuously reproduced from the times of the apostles down to the present day. Modern European civilization, in all its finer and more moral elements, is a sign. The elevation of woman is a sign. The abolition of slavery and serfdom is a sign. Hospitals, orphanages, convalescent homes, almshouses, infirmaries, are signs. Moral chastity in art is a sign. The spirit of fraternity, working its way, fitfully but diffusively, into all classes and castes of society, is a sign. The increase of the humanity of man is a sign. The effort to connect nation with nation by ties of reciprocal beneficence is a sign. The loving labors among the lapsed and the unfortunate, of a white-robed army of Christian ladies, is a sign. The persistent advance in politics of right, as against might, is a sign. The most villainous demons of society are still cast out in Christ's name. Converts speak in new tongues, and more musically and expressively than if they were employing the most felicitous idioms of foreign languages. And yet, in the matter of foreign languages, nothing in the world is so polyglot as Christianity and the Bible. Medical missions replace the ancient gift of healing, and are more extensively effectual. By and by Christianity will dry up all the fountains of disease. And meanwhile, in place of immunity, here or there, from the fangs of literal serpents, and the deadliness of hellbore draughts, there are hundreds of thousands of the youthful and inexperienced, who, by the power of Christianity in their hearts, are kept in security amid customs into which the old serpent has breathed his spirit of decoy, or taught his dupes to allure with the poisoned chalice of indulgence. — Morrison.

III. The Ascension. — Vers. 19, 20. From Mount Olivet, near Bethany, Thursday, May 18, A. D. 30.

19. After the Lord had spoken unto them. The words above, and other words recorded in the other Evangelists. He was received up into heaven. In Acts it says, "a cloud received him out of their sight." There was a manifest propriety in the last withdrawal of the Lord while ascending, not consisting in a disappearance of his body as on former occasions since the resurrection; for thus might his abiding humanity be called in question. As it was, he went up past the visible boundary of heaven, — the cloud, — in human form; and so we think of and pray to him. — Alford. Between us and his visible

20. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them*,¹ and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.

¹ Acts 5: 12; 14: 3. 1 Cor. 2: 4, 5. Heb. 2: 4.

presence that cloud still rolls. But the eye of faith can pierce it. And if he is gone away, yet he has given us in his Holy Spirit a nearer sense of his presence, a closer infolding in the arms of his tenderness, than we could have enjoyed, even if we had lived with him of old. We may be as near to him at all times — and more than all when we kneel down to pray — as the beloved disciple was when he laid his head upon his breast. He promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world; and we have not found his promise fail. — *Farrar*. And sat on the right hand of God. Our Lord was "taken up," and bore our redeemed humanity into the very presence of God, into "the place of all places in the universe of things, in situation most eminent, in quality most holy, in dignity most excellent, in glory most illustrious, the inmost sanctuary of God's temple above." — *Barrows' Sermon on the Ascension*. The glory has taken a permanent form, and as a glorified man he is ever after set forth in the book of God. — *Alexander*. The Evangelist does not conceive of Christ's session as a state of inactive rest. (1) As the High Priest of his Church he pleads with the Father the merits of his wondrous sacrifice (Rom. 8: 34. Heb. 4: 14; 7: 25. 1 John 2: 1, 2). (2) As the Prophet, he teaches, inspires, and guides his Church into all truth (Deut. 18: 15. Luke 24: 19). (3) As King of kings, he sways the destinies of the universe, and employs the agency of heaven and earth for the government and defence of his people, till he shall have subdued all things unto himself (Phil. 3: 21), and the last enemy, even Death, shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 26), and the victory, for which all creation waits, shall be completely won (Rom. 8: 19-23). — *Cambridge Bible*.

20. Ver. 20 indicates in a sentence the work wrought out in subsequent years, and detailed in part in the Book of Acts. Went forth. The disciples returned, we are told, with great joy; the sorrow of the departure swallowed up in the promise of his abiding presence, and the joy increased by working for the loved Master, and bringing all the people to love him. The Lord working with them. His Holy Spirit was sent, and the miracles promised were wrought in confirmation of the truth; and there were great results. "Though but of yesterday," said Tertullian, "yet have we Christians filled your cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, your armies themselves, your tribes, companies, the palace, the senate, and courts of justice: only your temples have we left you free." Amen. "So may it be." This word is not found in the best manuscripts, but is the fitting response of the Church to the command and promise of its Lord. — *Abbott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

W. H. Pennock's *Christ our King*. Max Müller on *Missions*. F. W. Robertson's *Sermons*, series 2, "The Doubt of Thomas." A. Tholuck's *Light from the Cross*. J. Hamilton's sermon, in *Pulpit Eloquence*, on "The Parting Promise and the Present Saviour." Fitch's *Sermon* on "The Ascension of Jesus." Stevenson's *Praying and Working*. Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived*. Dr. Dorchester's *World's Progress*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The legacy. Eudamidas, a citizen of Corinth, died in poverty; but, having two wealthy friends, Arctæus and Charixenus, he made a will in which he bequeathed his family to them, to be taken care of as their own. And the two friends accepted the legacy. So Christ has bequeathed to his Church the world to be converted. Let us accept of the legacy. — *Gotthold's Emblems*.

II. The world's conversion. Dr. Dorchester, in his late book on the *World's Progress*, has shown by figures, and set forth eloquently by diagrams, the wonderful progress the gospel has been making; a gradual growth from the first, but with a marvellous impetus during the last few years. Dr. Livingstone's words are true: "We believe it because God has been preparing the world for something glorious. The last fifty years have accomplished wonders. On the American Continent, what a wonderful amalgamation of races we have witnessed, how wonderfully they have been fused into that one American people! — type and earnest of a larger fusion which Christianity will yet accomplish, when, by its blessed power, all tribes and tongues and races shall become one holy family. The present popularity of beneficences promises well for the missionary cause in the future. Men's hearts are undergoing a process of enlargement. Their sympathies are taking a wider scope. The world is getting closer, smaller, — quite a compact affair. The world for Christ will be yet realized. — *Dr. Livingstone*."

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 9-14. God gives abundant proofs of that which he wishes us to believe.
2. Jesus manifests himself especially to the penitent, sorrowing sinner, who has learned to love much.
3. In early days, as now, many in the Church were slow to perceive the glory and blessings of the gospel.
4. Vers. 15, 16. The commission of Christ to his Church: its field is the world; its work is to preach the gospel; its congregation embraces every creature; its offer is a free and full salvation; the condition of salvation is faith in Christ, and confession of and consecration to him: the consequence of rejecting Christ's salvation is eternal condemnation. — *Abbott.*
5. Vers. 17, 18. Signs and wonders ever attest the preaching of the gospel: wonderful experiences, wonderful changes of heart and character, wonderful effects of education, thought, life, happiness, prosperity, in nations who believe.
6. Ver. 19. Christ ascended to heaven, that he might be the ever-present, omnipresent Saviour.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

The subject of to-day's lesson is **THE DUTY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD.** (1) *Proofs of the gospel*, vers. 9-14, by means of the infallible proofs that Jesus rose again. The number of times Jesus appeared, for 40 days, to hundreds of people, overcoming doubts. (2) *The mission of the gospel*, ver. 15: What is the gospel? To whom to be preached? By whom? Have we done it? The blessed effects on all of doing it. (3) *The effects of the gospel*, vers. 16-20: on those who believe; on those who refuse to believe; the signs that followed; the present wonders of the gospel; the ascension.

LESSON XIII. — DECEMBER 24.

REVIEW.

For this last review it may be well to take, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the life of Christ, and impress upon the scholars the main incidents of his life, leaving a picture which never can be effaced. Below is given a series of questions, showing one way in which this general view of Christ's life may be set forth.

SUBJECT — THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

- I. *His early life.* When and where was Jesus born? His mother's name? Give three incidents of his early life. In what place did he live? for how many years? What was his occupation? When and where was he baptized?
- II. *His ministry.* How old was Jesus when he began his public ministry? How long did it last? In what places was most of it spent? What other countries did he visit? Name the chief cities in which he taught. Name two mountains, a lake, and a river, connected with his life.
- III. *His teachings.* What sermon of Jesus is recorded? In what way did he do most of his teaching? Name some of the principle parables he spoke. Give some of his illustrations, II: 7, 12; III: 1, 6, 9, 10. What were some of the things against which he warned men? What were some of the leading truths he taught?
- IV. *His miracles.* Name some of the principal miracles. Against what evils and enemies of man were they directed? Were they all miracles of help and blessing? What spiritual truths did his miracles teach? As to what needs and dangers of the present day do they show Christ's power to satisfy and guard?
- V. *Personal incidents.* On what occasion did Christ spend a night in prayer? When and where was his true nature revealed? When and where did he choose his apostles? What was done to Christ at a supper? On what occasion only did Christ ride? What two gardens are rendered immortal by Christ's sufferings?
- VI. *The great sacrifice.* By whom was Jesus betrayed? where? By whom was he condemned? On what occasions was he mocked? Where was he crucified? How many times did he speak on the cross? How long did the crucifixion last? What happened at its close? Where was Jesus buried?
- VII. *The resurrection and the life.* How long was Jesus in the tomb? When did he rise? Who saw him first? How many times did he appear? For how long? What was his last message to the Church? What was his last act on earth? When did he ascend to God?

LESSON XIV. — DECEMBER 31.

THE KINGDOM OF PEACE. — ISA. II:1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT. — *The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* — ISA. II:9.

TIME. — Isaiah's ministry extended from about 762 to 700 B. C.

PLACE. — Isaiah prophesied in the kingdom of Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

INTRODUCTION.

This chapter gave the people of Judah a glimpse of "the good time coming," — a vision of the promised triumph of God's kingdom, to cheer them in their discouragement, and to inspire a new motive for serving and obeying God.

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| <p>1. And ¹there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of ²Jesse, and a ³branch shall grow out of his roots:</p> <p>2. ⁴And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;</p> <p>3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD:</p> | <p>and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:</p> <p>4. But ⁶with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall ⁶smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.</p> |
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¹ Isa. 53: 2. Zech. 6: 12. Rev. 5: 5. ² Acts 13: 23. ³ Isa. 4: 2. Jer. 23: 5. ⁴ Isa. 61: 1. Matt. 3: 16. John 1: 32, 33; 3: 34. ⁵ Ps. 72: 2 4. Rev. 19: 11. ⁶ Job 4: 9. Mal. 4: 6. 2 Thess. 2: 8.

EXPLANATORY.

I. The Personal Qualities of the Messiah. — Vers. 1-5. 1. In the last chapter the destruction of Assyria, the power oppressing Judah, is likened to the cutting-down of a forest, never to be renewed. In this verse the misfortunes of Judah are contrasted with this; the Judah forest shall sprout again. Shall come forth a rod. A shoot. Out of the stem. The stock or stump left in the ground after the tree is cut down. A branch. A slender shoot or twig. That it should be from the hewn-down stock of Jesse, implied that the once ennobled line of David had sunk to the level of common life, the family domain at Bethlehem. — *Cook*. This passage applies to Jesus Christ, who sprang from the family of Jesse at its lowest state. He was of the royal line of David.

2. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. In him the Spirit of the Lord should have an abiding *resting-place*. His sacred body should be the true temple in which the fulness of the Godhead should dwell. — *Cook*. Wisdom, understanding. Theoretical and practical wisdom. Christ was the wisdom of God, in saving men. Counsel and might. The ability to plan and the ability to execute. — *Alexander*. Knowledge. The perfect knowledge of the whole will and counsel of God, especially that which concerns the salvation of men; also of the hidden and secret things of the hearts of men. — *Pool*. Fear of the Lord. Not the fear of diffidence or horror, but of reverence; a care to please him. — *Pool*.

3. Of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. Infallible sagacity or power of discerning good and evil would render him superior to the illusions of the senses. — *Alexander*. Religion makes one of quick understanding in knowing right and wrong; gives one a sensitive moral nature. Not judge after the sight of the eyes. He will not judge by appearance, but by the reality; not be misled in his judgments by rank, wealth, popular opinion, or pretence of virtue, but act according to right and truth. It means also, he shall not be short-sighted in his views, nor "despair under the most discouraging circumstances." — *Alexander*. Reprove. Censure, decide causes.

4. With righteousness shall he judge the poor. That is, he shall see that impartial justice is done them. He would be the friend and patron of the poor. — *Barnes*. This

5. And ¹righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6. ²The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down

together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

9. ³They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

¹ Eph. 6: 14. ² Isa. 65: 25. Ezek. 34: 25. ³ Job 5: 23. Isa. 2: 4; 35: 9.

is the royal quality of a true king. **Equity.** Impartiality. **The meek.** The humble, the lower class, referring to those who are usually passed by or oppressed by those in power. — *Barnes.* **Smite the earth.** The world or people of the world in contradistinction to his people chosen out of the world; hence the same as "the wicked" in the following parallel clause. **Rod of his mouth . . . breath of his lips.** His words shall be like a staff for the punishment of the wicked. The breath of his lips means that which goeth forth from his lips, — his doctrines, his commands, his decisions. All this is descriptive of a ruler who by his commands and decisions effectually subdues and punishes the wicked. That is, he does justice to all. — *Barnes.* **Paul** (2 Thess. 2: 8) applies these words to the destruction of anti-Christ at the coming of Christ. — *Alexander.* **Slay the wicked.** He will destroy those who refuse to leave their wickedness. He will destroy the wickedness of the others, destroying the wicked by changing them into the good.

5. **Righteousness shall be the girdle.** The loose flowing robe was confined by a girdle in any active labor or running. The virtues of righteousness and justice would adhere to the Messiah as closely and inseparably as the garment does to the body to which it is girded. The figure of representing the virtues as clothing is common in the Scriptures. — *Barnes.* **Reins.** The inward parts of the body around which a girdle usually goes.

II. **The Characteristics of the Messiah's Kingdom.** — Vers. 6-9. These verses contain a highly figurative description of the Messiah's kingdom, and the change in the nature and actions of men produced by it.

6. **Wolf . . . lamb, etc.** It has been pointed out (Rev. J. C. Wood, *Bible Animals*, p. 35), that, while the *wolf* as a rule attacks sheep-folds, a *leopard* can follow the goat along the precipices where no wolf would venture; and the *lion* will carry off oxen, which neither leopard or wolf could move. — *Cook.* **Kid.** The young of the goat. Those men who oppress and prey on the weaker will cease from their evil nature. There will be peace, security, prosperity, and liberty and love. The *wolf* class are the cross, ill-tempered, quarrelsome. The *leopard* class are the cruel, insidious, fierce. The *lion* class, the proud, the strong; those who use greatness and wealth for oppression. — *From Newton's Rills from the Fountain of Life.* **A little child.** Mind and conscience shall still govern; and the smallest and weakest shall be perfectly secure in all their rights.

7. **Lion eat straw like the ox.** Representing a change in the dispositions of men as great as if the lion were to lose his natural appetite for blood, and to live on the usual food of the ox. — *Barnes.* Those who have lived by wrong and oppression shall obtain their living in a righteous way.

8. **Play on the hole of the asp.** The *asp* is a small, malignantly poisonous serpent. The cockatrice. The great viper. — *Cook.* A deadly serpent. The very worst men, those who now tempt and ruin innocence, will be changed. The children can go anywhere, and not be led into ruin as now.

9. **All my holy mountain.** Mount Zion, the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall fill the whole earth (Dan. 2: 35, 45). **The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.** A living, experimental, practical knowledge. — *Lange.* The heathen all converted; all nations believing and receiving the benefits of the gospel. **As the waters cover the sea.** The world shall be full of the knowledge and love of God as the waters cover the bed of the sea in every part, every depth, every inlet and bay.

WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE? (1) This is a picture of the Messiah's kingdom as a whole, from beginning to end. (2) It is partially fulfilled wherever the gospel is preached, in multitudes of homes, churches, and communities, — almost perfectly in some hearts. (3) It is a promise of the complete evangelization of the world, — that which the gospel is bringing, and for which each of us should labor and pray. Every one who becomes a Christian is helping on this blessed time. Each one should cherish in his own heart and life these things which will make earth a heaven when all shall receive and love them.

